



# Friday's jolt lays bare Dhaka's fragility

## Rajuk slammed as risky buildings go unchecked for years

HELEMUL ALAM, DIPAN NANDY and AHMED DEEPTO

Building owners often chase short-term gains during construction, flouting rules as Rajuk looks the other way. Every time a disaster strikes, experts raise alarms and the agency vows action. Then some more days go, the dust settles, and everything returns to the old, perilous rhythm.

After Friday's 5.7-magnitude earthquake, which caused at least four deaths in Dhaka, experts warned that far greater losses await if the authorities fail to act now.

According to the Dhaka district administration, at least 14 buildings in the capital sustained damage from the quake, while the Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) put the number at over 50.

"We are still working. Many more buildings will be identified," Rajuk Chairman Md Riazul Islam told The Daily Star yesterday morning.

He said the next step was an immediate assessment of all buildings in Dhaka, at least those under the Detailed Area Plan (DAP), to determine which structures cannot withstand even minor shocks.

Rajuk is, by mandate, responsible for monitoring buildings from planning through construction and ensuring that rules are followed thereafter.

Criticising the agency for chronic failures, Professor Munaz Ahmed Noor, vice president of the Bangladesh

### RECOMMENDATIONS BY EXPERTS

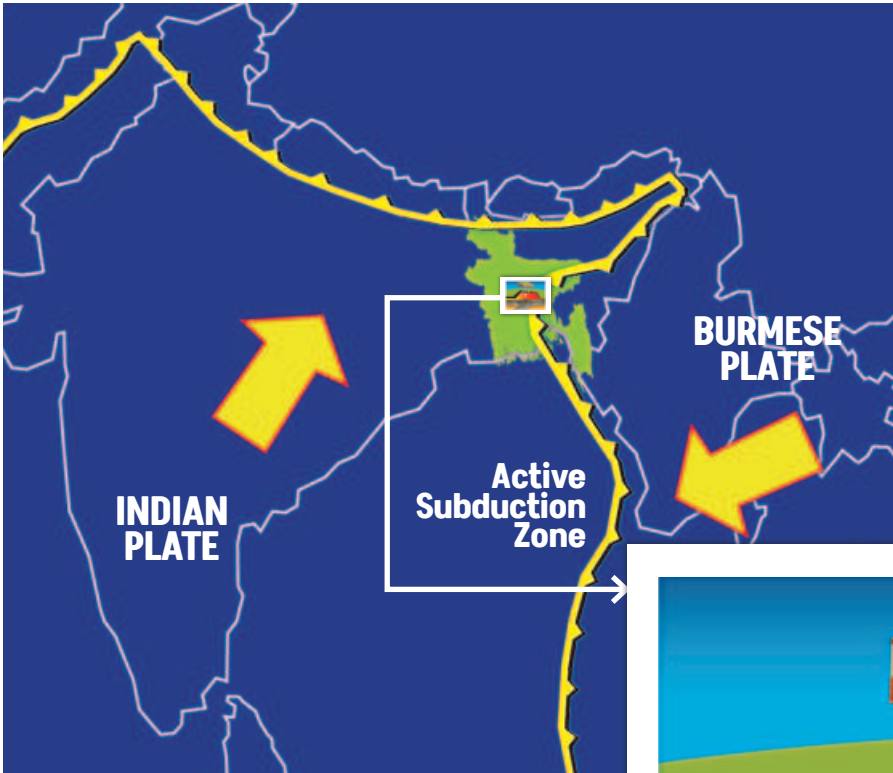
- Assess all damaged buildings, prioritise them by risk
- Demolish or retrofit unsafe buildings
- Strengthen Rajuk's manpower, monitoring capacity

Earthquake Society, said Rajuk "always wakes up after a major incident," largely because it lacks the manpower for sustained oversight.

Prof Munaz said everyone should follow the building code very strictly when constructing any structure. In the past, the National Building Code was neither properly regulated nor enforced, which led many buildings to be identified as vulnerable in the Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Survey, he said.

"The loads used in design must be applied correctly, and after the design

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Dhaka is near the Indo-Burma subduction zone

There, the Indian Plate is sliding slowly beneath the Burma Plate

This movement builds underground stress in eastern Bangladesh

Sudden release of this stress causes earthquakes, like the recent ones

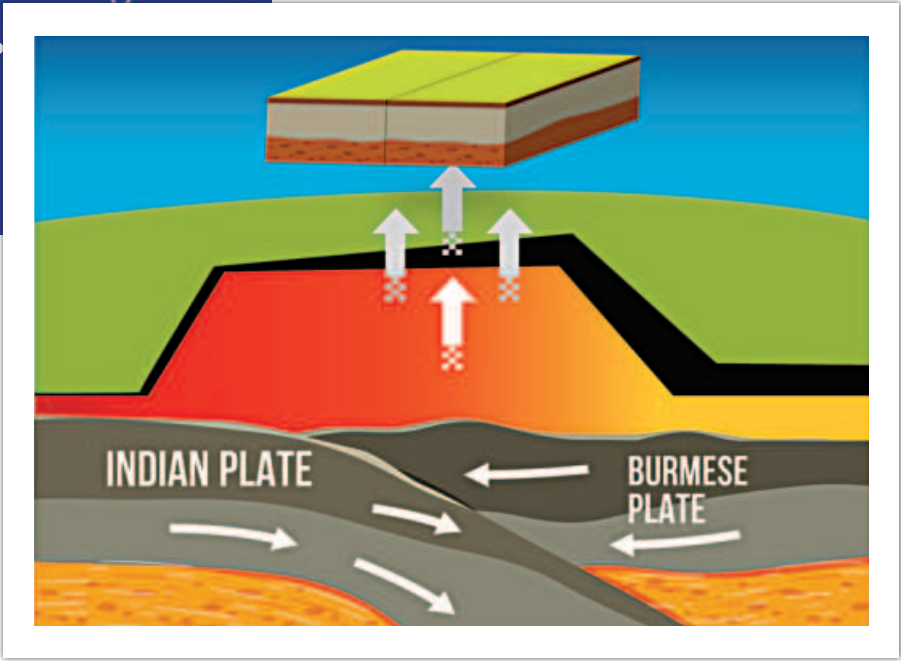
3 QUAKES IN 32 HOURS; ALL 3 HAD EPICENTRES IN NARSINGDI, NEXT TO DHAKA

'Indo-Burma subduction zone accumulating strain capable of generating a significant seismic event, up to a magnitude of nine'

Professor Syed Humayun Akhter, Seismologist, former faculty, Geology department, DU

"I think these earthquakes are foreshocks of a bigger one. We must be prepared for that,"

Prof Mehedi Ansary, civil engineering BUET



# Rethink strategy as global economic power shifts

## Speakers urge policymakers at Bay of Bengal Conversation 2025



"If we want to reposition ourselves in the global system, we need to have smarter and more dynamic policy makers. We need to also have a much more adventurous and creative private sector who must get out of the 'LDC cocoon'..."

Noted economist Rehman Sobhan



### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh must rethink its place in a fast-changing global system where economic and strategic power is shifting towards the Global South, eminent economist Prof Rehman Sobhan said yesterday.

Speaking at the "Speed Talk" on the opening day of the Bay of Bengal Conversation 2025 in the afternoon, organised by the Centre for Governance Studies in the capital, he focused on the political economy of the changing international order and how Bangladesh

should respond.

The three-day conference, themed "Rivals, Ruptures, and Realignments", will continue until November 24. It brings together 200 speakers, 300 delegates and more than 1,000 participants from 85 countries.

Prof Sobhan recalled that in the 1970s, developing countries pushed for a new economic order to counter "the then-hegemonic influence of the North Atlantic powers".

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# DU closed for 2 weeks to assess tremor risks

## JnU suspends classes, exams today

### DU CORRESPONDENT

As the country experienced its third earthquake since Friday morning, the authorities yesterday decided to close Dhaka University for two weeks to assess tremor risks and carry out necessary renovations of residential halls.

Meanwhile, all classes and examinations at Jagannath University (JnU) will remain suspended today for the same reason.

At an emergency meeting of the DU Syndicate late last night, the authorities instructed residential students to vacate their halls by 5:00pm today.

The decision followed protests from female students of Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitree Hall, who demanded a safer campus.

Around 12:15am, many of them gathered in front of the 20-storey Swadhinota Bhaban, a residential building meant for third class staff, to take shelter there.

Students of Haji Muhammad Mohsin Hall had already occupied 33 of the building's 144 vacant flats since Friday night, after a 5.7-magnitude earthquake shook the capital and triggered panic.

Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitree Hall Union Vice-President Nishita Zaman said, "A group of hall residents took position on the building's ground floor at 10:00pm, demanding safe accommodation. Minutes earlier, I heard they were trying to break the locks of vacant rooms to move in."

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# Experts flag growing underground stress

### PINAKI ROY

Three earthquakes hit near Dhaka in just 32 hours, raising concern as seismologists warn they could be foreshocks of a much stronger one.

The first, a strong 5.7-magnitude quake on Friday morning, killed 10 people in the capital, Narsingdi, and Narayanganj.

A second quake, measuring 3.3 on the Richter scale, was felt in Narsingdi's Palash around 10:36am yesterday. The third, a 3.7-magnitude tremor, followed at 6:06pm, according to a Met office bulletin.

All three had their epicentres in Narsingdi, next to the capital.

Asked whether Bangladesh's many underlying fault lines raise the risk of more earthquakes, seismologist Prof Syed Humayun Akhter said the presence of fault lines alone is not the issue.

"The real concern is whether the energy accumulating in a subduction zone can cause a big quake," said Prof Humayun, who has studied earthquakes for 40 years.

Dhaka lies close to the Indo-Burma subduction zone, where the Indian plate dives beneath the Burma plate at the country's eastern margin. Experts have warned for nearly two decades that being situated near such a zone means sitting

atop a seismic time bomb.

Seismologists say this vast zone, from Sylhet down to Teknaf, is steadily accumulating strain capable of triggering a major earthquake.

"The energy that was locked in this subduction zone [a place where one tectonic plate slides under another]

Dhaka remains deeply vulnerable because of its geology, density, and high economic exposure.

for a long time is now being released in Narsingdi in small segments," said Prof Humayun.

He said it is impossible to forecast whether the next event will be a massive one.

"If the energy continues to come out in small segments like it did on Friday, then possibly there will be multiple small quakes. But we have calculated that the energy accumulated there could create a quake between magnitude 8.2 and 9," he added.

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# Prepare for referendum on polls day

## Govt directs EC

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has asked the Election Commission to prepare for a referendum to be held alongside the upcoming 13th national election scheduled for February next year.

Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin yesterday said the EC has received a letter from the government instructing it to make preparations for the referendum.

Speaking at a workshop organised by the Asian Network for Free Elections at a city hotel yesterday, the CEC said a referendum law would be enacted next week. Once the law is passed, the EC will begin its preparations.

Terming the arrangement of both the election and the referendum on the same day a challenge, he said no previous commission had ever faced such a situation.

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Agricultural workers sun-drying paddy at the Hatchery intersection in Khulna's Dumuria upazila. Men and women from nearby areas work here daily during the Aman harvest, earning Tk 5 per maund plus 300 grams each of rice and khud for parboiling, drying and breaking paddy. A team of 12 to 14 workers can process about 200 maunds in three to four days. The photo was taken on Friday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

# Israeli airstrikes kill 21 in Gaza

AFP, Gaza City

Gaza's civil defence agency said 21 people were killed and dozens more wounded in multiple Israeli air strikes on the Palestinian territory yesterday, further straining the fragile truce between Israel and Hamas.

Both sides have accused each other of violating the ceasefire, which came into effect on October 10.

The Israeli military said an "armed terrorist" had crossed the so-called Yellow Line boundary within the Gaza Strip, behind which Israeli troops have withdrawn, and fired at soldiers, in a "blatant violation of the ceasefire agreement".

The Israeli military said that in response to the incident in southern Gaza, on a route used for humanitarian aid deliveries in the territory, it "began striking terror targets in the Gaza Strip".

Mahmud Bassal, spokesman for the civil defence agency which operates under Hamas authority, told AFP there were "21 martyrs this evening in five separate Israeli air strikes, in a clear violation of the ceasefire in Gaza".

AFP has sought a comment from the Israeli military on yesterday's air strikes.

The first reported strike targeted a vehicle in the Al-Rimal neighbourhood in western Gaza City.

An AFP photographer at the scene witnessed the burned-out car.

Passers-by approached the wreckage, with children appearing to be trying to salvage food from inside.

Israel and Hamas agreed to a US-brokered ceasefire that came into effect last month after more than two years of war.

On Wednesday, Gaza saw one of its deadliest days since the truce between Israel and Hamas came into effect, with officials reporting 27 fatalities.



## Level playing field still elusive ahead of polls

Says Jamaat ameer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chattogram

J a m a a t - e - Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday said that the political environment in the run-up to the national election is not congenial, warning that any delay beyond February in holding the polls could trigger a national crisis.

“There is no level playing field in the election. But we have to create it ourselves, so be prepared. If this election is not held by February, the country will face a crisis,” said Shafiqur, while talking to journalists at Chawkbazar Parade Ground in Chattogram city in the afternoon.

In response to a question, he said, “If the referendum is held on election day, there is a possibility of an electoral genocide.”

Clarifying Jamaat’s position on the PR (proportional representation) issue, Shafiqur said, “Our demand

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Palestinians inspect the site of an Israeli strike in Gaza City yesterday. Israeli airstrikes in Gaza killed at least 14 people and wounded several others, local health authorities said.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## DU closed for 2 weeks to assess tremor risks

FROM PAGE 1

Students explained that they moved into the unused flats out of fear, accusing the university of ignoring long-standing warnings about unsafe hall conditions.

“This has been a problem for years,” said third-year student Md Ramzan, who shifted his belongings from the hall to the staff quarters around 11:30pm. “We protested even six months ago, but nobody cared. After the earthquake, it became a matter of life and death. We are not here permanently, we only want the authorities to finally fix our hall.”

Fourth-year student Robiul Islam described their daily anxiety. “While you sleep, the ceiling could fall on your head. If staff have these comfortable flats, why must we live with such uncertainty, especially when many of them rent out their allotted houses instead of living in them?”

A DU press release yesterday said all classes and examinations will remain suspended until December 6, and all residential halls must be vacated for a comprehensive post-earthquake inspection, risk assessment, and renovation.

“The Syndicate meeting considered the physical and mental distress students suffered due to the recent earthquake and aftershocks, and prioritised their overall safety,” the notice said.

The Syndicate also noted that expert opinions from Buet engineers, the Planning and Development Office director, and the chief engineer were reviewed. Their assessment concluded that a thorough inspection of all halls is essential to evaluate structural risks and determine necessary repairs.

Jagannath University Vice-Chancellor Prof Rezaul Karim said, “Repeated earthquakes in the capital have created widespread anxiety among students and others on campus. Therefore, we are suspending all classes and examinations only for Sunday.”

He said activities related to the JnUCSU election will continue as scheduled.

Two earthquakes were felt yesterday, marking three tremors in just 32 hours. The powerful quake killed 10 people in several parts of the country, including Dhaka.

### 7 HURT IN ALIA MADRASA CLASH

Meanwhile, seven students were injured in a clash between two groups at Alia Madrasa in Dhaka’s Bakshibazar last night.

The injured are Sadiq, 21, Moin, 22, Elias, 21, Omar Faruk, 21, Abu Bakr, 22, Walid, 22, and Enamul, 22.

All of them were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, police said.

The incident occurred around 10:00pm. Police first respondent to the scene and later army personnel were deployed to bring the situation under control.

Inspector Md Faruk, in-charge of the DMCH police outpost, told The Daily Star, “A milad mahfil was being held inside the madrasa. During the event, a verbal altercation broke out between two groups of students, which eventually escalated into a clash.”

“All seven injured students came in with head injuries. However, they did not provide details about the exact cause behind the altercation,” he added.

## Friday’s jolt lays bare Dhaka’s fragility

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is completed, the detailing must also be done properly. This is often where major negligence occurs. Sometimes the design is done correctly, but the reinforcement is not placed as detailed in the drawings,” he added.

Prof Mehedi Ahmed Ansary of BUET’s civil engineering department stressed that damaged buildings must be examined immediately and prioritised based on risk.

“Some buildings have column damage, others none. We need clear segmentation to decide what must be done first,” he said.

He warned that a stronger earthquake could cause far more devastating collapses. “If we act now, we can prevent greater losses.”

He suggested Rajuk issue notices or newspaper advertisements instructing homeowners to assess their buildings and submit reports. Experts could then guide the next steps.

Although the number of visibly damaged structures remains limited, he said many across Dhaka likely suffered some degree of structural impact.

### DAMAGED BUILDINGS

Near Mitali Bidyapith in Swamibagh, a small crowd of curious onlookers gathered yesterday morning around a building that had tilted into the neighbouring one after Friday’s quake.

One observer, teenager Jishan Alam, said he had come to see the slanting structure in person after hearing of its condition.

It was clearly visible that the eight storey building at 52/1 Mitali School Road had leaned against its neighbour, its sixth and seventh floors pressing into the adjoining structure.

Saiful Islam, the building manager, told The Daily Star he was not present during the incident. The owner was abroad, he said, and tenants

continued to live inside.

A similar situation unfolded in Khilgaon’s Sipahibag area, where two five-storey buildings stand side by side at the Tempo Stand intersection.

There, Ruhul Manjil appeared to have tilted after the quake, leaving only a narrow gap between the structures. Locals reported cracks inside, and residents watched nervously from their windows.

At midday yesterday, the Shwapno outlet on Ruhul Manjil’s ground floor remained closed.

Across the road, Sayem Enterprise, a mobile phone shop, also shuttered after cracks formed in its walls. Its AC unit fell during the tremor.

The shop’s owner, Md Belayet Hossain, said the building had been designed for four storeys, but a fifth was added later without following approved plans.

The building’s owner declined to comment.

While inspecting sites, Rajuk Chairman Riazul warned that the Armanitola building, where three people died when a rooftop brick railing collapsed, could be sealed if design and approval documents were not submitted within seven days.

In Mugda, he and his team inspected a building leaning onto its neighbour. Shops on the ground floors of both structures were ordered closed, and owners were instructed to submit design documents within a week. He also ordered the removal of illegal food stalls encroaching on the footpath.

At Badda Alatunnessa School and College, he inspected three buildings. Two had column cracks; he ordered design submissions and directed steps for removing the unsafe structures. Academic activities were temporarily suspended.

Riazul added that Old Dhaka remained particularly vulnerable, with many multi-storey buildings erected without approvals.

a magnitude 8 quake, 250 to 300 years.

He said the timings of past major quakes, from the 8.5-magnitude Chittagong earthquake of 1762 to the 7.6-magnitude Sreemangal quake of 1918 and the 7.1-magnitude Dhubri quake of 1930, must be considered when assessing current risk.

“I think these earthquakes are foreshocks of a bigger one. We must be prepared for that,” he said of the tremors felt on Friday and yesterday.

As one of the world’s most densely populated cities, Dhaka is dangerously ill-prepared. If Friday’s quake had been magnitude 7, Prof Ansary warned, casualties could have reached three lakh, and 35 percent of the city would have been destroyed.

“So we need to start checking our buildings according to the building code,” he said.

He suggested classifying every building in Dhaka using a colour code – green for structures built safely and according to code, yellow or orange for those at risk and in need of strengthening, and red for buildings that must be evacuated immediately.

Rajuk Chief Engineer Md Nurul Islam told The Daily Star that in Old Dhaka, the damaged parts were mostly those that deviated from approved designs.

### NO ACTION ON RISKY BUILDINGS

In 2022, the Rajuk identified 42 buildings in Dhaka, Gazipur, and Narayanganj as being at immediate risk and ordered them vacated and demolished within three months. It also listed 187 structures requiring retrofitting. Most have seen no progress.

The high-risk buildings belong to several government and autonomous bodies, including the Education Engineering Department, Department of Health Education, LGED, Jagannath University, Dhaka University, Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board, the Institute of Leather Technology, and the Bangladesh Medical University hospital. They were flagged during a survey of 3,252 structures under the Urban Resilience Project.

Asked about these buildings, the Rajuk chairman said most were government-owned, and that a citywide reassessment was essential.

He said risky buildings were now being listed, sealed, or cleared as needed.

“This earthquake is a major warning. Science suggests a bigger shock may be ahead,” he said.

He added that the work must be collaborative, involving Rajuk, city corporations, disaster management authorities, the army, and the fire service.

“We are disconnecting the utility meters of those constructing illegally. Some keep constructing using stolen meters or generators,” Riazul said.

He urged owners to consider demolishing unsafe or ageing structures on small plots and then rebuilding jointly. “Combining plots may mean short-term losses, but it brings long-term benefits.”

It has been done in the US, Japan, and India, he said, adding that after the Rana Plaza disaster, Bangladesh implemented a similar process for the garments sector.

## Prepare for referendum

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Referring to the high public expectations over the election, he said, “In the past two to three days, I have realised how great those expectations are. This is extremely challenging for us. Whatever challenges lie ahead, our main goal is to deliver a transparent election to the nation. We have given this assurance to the political parties as well.”

The CEC said that, no matter how challenging it may be, the Commission will hold the referendum and the national election on the same day.

“We have no option but to move forward,” he said. “We have received the letter to organise the referendum. Once the law is enacted, we will be able to say how the referendum will be conducted.”

## Rethink strategy

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The aim, he said, was fairer access to trade, technology and capital, but little changed and Western dominance carried into the 21st century.

“We are living in a world now in which the balance of power is relocating itself towards the Global South, and within the Global South, to its epicentre within the Asian region – particularly in South, Southeast, and East Asia.”

He noted that while the United States still has the largest GDP in nominal terms, China is second and India is fast catching up. By purchasing power parity, China is already the largest economy and India the third.

“If you project forward to 2050, the available projections indicate that, even in nominal terms, China will be the largest global economy, India will be third, and interestingly, Indonesia will be the fourth largest economy in the world.”

These shifts, he said, result from changes in trade, capital flows and technology. China is now the world’s largest exporter, and East Asia as a region trades more than the European Union.

“China has now become the largest trading partner of East and Southeast Asia, South Asia, West Asia, Central Asia, Africa and [major countries in] Latin America.

“These are the emerging objective facts of the global system, which are increasingly defining relations.”

Prof Sobhan warned that Bangladesh’s continued focus on the US garment market and duty-free privileges in the European Union reflects “yesterday’s strategies.”

“Despite its flaws and historical scars, the present constitution remains the judiciary’s only touchstone of legitimacy.”

– Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed



He said Bangladesh has duty-free access to India and China but has “neither diversified nor developed working arrangements” to enter their supply chains.

Calling on policymakers and the private sector to move beyond the “LDC cocoon”, he said, “If we want to reposition ourselves in the global system, we need to have smarter and more dynamic policymakers. We need to also have a much more adventurous and creative private sector....”

Earlier, at the inauguration, Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed said the July uprising did not seek to overturn the constitution but aimed to purify engagement with it by restoring transparency, accountability and responsiveness.

“The uprising forced Bangladesh to revisit the very grammar of its constitutional life, reminding every organ of the state that the rule of law is the moral architecture that secures legitimacy.”

He said the judiciary, as the only fully functioning constitutional organ during the transitional months, had to remain humble in its limits while ensuring that “no right is rendered illusory, no institution made captive, and no citizen abandoned”.

He added that last year’s structural initiatives were “constitutional correctives” aimed at strengthening judicial independence and balance.

Warning that reform is not guaranteed, he said future Supreme Court administrations may face a constitutional landscape different

from today’s. “Despite its flaws

and historical scars, the present constitution remains the judiciary’s only touchstone of legitimacy.”

Also at the inaugural session, Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain said Bangladesh chooses to be “an active, sovereign and responsible player” in a time of global realignment.

“States may be tempted to pick sides, but Bangladesh should first pick the right course.

“We will engage robustly, speak firmly when needed, and partner productively always with an eye on national interest and regional stability.”

He highlighted the shifting power, fragmentation of stability, weaponisation of knowledge, economic realignment and climate, borders and security.

At the Speed Talk segment, economist Debapriya Bhattacharya said Bangladesh is now dealing with three objectives: justice, reforms and inclusion, and that reforms connect the other two.

Referring to the White Paper he led, he said governance trends created three narrow groups – politicians, businessmen and bureaucrats – who avoided competition and produced crony capitalism, kleptocracy and oligarchs.

Debapriya said Bangladesh must break this “anti-reform coalition”.

“Designing reform is easy, but delivering reform is one of the toughest.... Reforms must be coherent, politically grounded and visible to citizens, and should continue beyond any single government.”

Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam said Bangladesh

## Voters still unclear about referendum

Says Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said people have yet to understand the issue of the referendum and PR system.

Addressing a discussion at the Diploma Engineers Institution’s multipurpose hall in Dhaka’s Kakrail, he said, “People in Bangladesh understand ‘one man, one vote’. A person contests elections, there is a symbol, and voters cast their ballots accordingly – that is what we have followed since the beginning. Now they want to change that and hold a referendum.”

“A referendum means a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ choice. But now they say there will be four questions on one ballot. People haven’t understood anything yet. They probably won’t understand even by the last day,” he said.

Fakhrul said one political party had been “shouting” for PR, claiming elections would not be held without it.

“They made a lot of noise. But now their tone has softened. We are seeing hectic lobbying everywhere for the election. This is not right. People should be guided properly toward what they are being asked to accept.”

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A mother comforts her injured son at the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation in the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar yesterday. Ashikul, 9, broke his left shoulder joint trying to come down the building in panic during Friday's earthquake.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Injured during tremor, they still shake in fear

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and DIPAN NANDY

There was a wave of joy at Majeda Khatun's house on Friday morning.

Her daughter, son-in-law, and grandson had come to visit during the weekend. But as soon as she stepped out the door to buy food for her grandson, the surroundings began to tremble.

Panicked, she tried to rush downstairs and ended up breaking her right leg. She is now admitted to the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (NITOR) in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka.

"I keep remembering how the building was shaking. Even now, I shudder in fear," Majeda said yesterday evening.

Like her, 22 other people are also admitted to various wards at NITOR, many of whom are scheduled for surgery on Sunday.

Majeda's daughter, Jannati Begum, said her mother lives in Jahid Market, Tongi.

"Since it was a day off, we went to visit her. During the earthquake, she tried to come down quickly and broke her leg. We first took her to Tongi Hospital, and from there she was referred to NITOR," she said.

She added that her mother's fear has not subsided. "Since Friday, she has shuddered four or five times."



Nine-year-old Ashikul Islam had gone to visit his maternal aunt's house in Basabo's Dakshingaon area with his mother, Yasmin Akter. While the family was having breakfast with khichuri, the earthquake struck.

"In the panic to come down, Ashikul broke the shoulder joint of

his left arm," Yasmin said, adding that her son is still afraid.

Sixty-year-old Selina Begum also suffered injuries, breaking her left arm. Her daughter, Rozina Akter, said, "During the earthquake, my mother was alone at home. Since the door was open, she tried to jump off the bed to get out quickly and got injured."

Selina added, "Even today (yesterday), I feel like the earthquake is happening. I am very scared."

NITOR Director Prof Md Abul Kenan told The Daily Star that 119 patients arrived after being injured in Friday's quake. Of them, 23 have been admitted.

Asked how most patients were injured, he said, "Most were hurt due to panic. Some were injured while rushing downstairs, some jumped from heights, some were struck by falling objects after reaching open spaces, and some fell after hanging from windows or railings."

Among the 23 admitted patients, three are women, one is a child, and

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Defying ban, lighter vehicles -- including motorcycles and easy bikes -- continue to ply the Dhaka-Mawa Expressway, often causing frequent accidents. The photo was taken on the Postogola Bridge over the Buriganga River in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Life inside DU female halls following a quake

TANGILA TASNIM

A 5.7-magnitude earthquake jolted the capital and surrounding areas on Friday, triggering panic among people across the city.

It is no different for the students living in five female dormitories of Dhaka University, with multiple dormitory buildings facing minor structural damage due to the tremor.

At Ruqayyah Hall, several residential areas in the hall -- which houses thousands of students -- developed visible cracks.

At Aparajita Building -- home to around 600 students -- one room on the third floor was damaged. The Shapla Building, residence of nearly 540 residents, reported cracks in three rooms.

The 7 March Building -- one of the largest, accommodating about 1,578 students -- experienced strong shaking but remained structurally stable.

Hall representatives yesterday said there were no serious casualties, although many students felt dizzy or disoriented from the shock.

Students described moments of chaos as the building shook and hundreds rushed outside. Several residents later reported feeling dizzy or unwell from the shock.

Meanwhile, Nishita Zaman Niha, general secretary of Bangladesh Kuwait

### AT A GLANCE

Several cracks reported at Ruqayyah Hall

Four students injured at Kuwait Maitree Hall

Cracks in six washroom pillars and a room at Shamsunnahar Hall

Minor structural damages across four buildings at Sufia Kamal Hall

Minor cracks found at Bangamata Hall, house tutor's residential area declared unsafe

Maitree Hall Union, said four students were injured, including one who suffered a major leg fracture.

She said minor cracks appeared in several buildings. In the main building, where around 700 students live, plaster

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Efforts on to rehabilitate AL through JP Says Nahid Islam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

NCP Convener Nahid Islam yesterday alleged that attempts are underway to "rehabilitate the Awami League through the Jatiya Party" ahead of the national election.

Speaking at a rally at the Jaiya Press Club, he said there will be no compromise regarding the July uprising or its trials.

Nahid questioned on what basis the Jatiya Party could be allowed to join the election when the interim government's formed consensus commission and the July Charter did not include that party.

He termed the move a "conspiracy" and said no party that collaborated with fascism should be allowed into the electoral process.

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# CHATTOGRAM CITY

## Quake risk looms amid building code violations

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chattogram

While Chattogram city is already vulnerable to severe earthquakes due to its geographical location, experts warn that unplanned urbanisation, widespread building code violations, and poor monitoring have further heightened the risks.

At least 70 percent of the port city's multi-storey buildings are at risk of collapse in the event of a major earthquake of magnitude 7 or higher, they said.

According to the Chattogram Development Authority, the city has 4,11,721 buildings – 3,87,757 are up to six storeys high, 13,480 are seven to ten storeys, 415 are

### AT A GLANCE

70% of multi-storey buildings at risk in Ctg

Many of the city's 4.11 lakh buildings built violating codes

Groundwater over-extraction weakening foundations

CDA lacks structural/design cell, faces manpower shortages

CDA marked at least 100 buildings for demolition

### EXPERTS CALL FOR

Identify vulnerable buildings

Retrofit risky structures

Demolish irreparable buildings

Ensure strict compliance with building codes

Make expert supervision mandatory

Reduce groundwater extraction

11–15 storeys, 50 are 16–20 storeys, and nine are above 20 storeys.

Experts say a significant portion of these high-rises is vulnerable because many were constructed in violation of building codes. In coastal areas like Chattogram, construction materials also deteriorate faster, while narrow roads can severely obstruct rescue operations after a major earthquake.

"The failure to properly follow the plans approved by the regulatory authority has increased the risk of collapse during an earthquake," said Dr Muhammad Rashidul



PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN



**A six-storey building in Chattogram's Mansurabad area tilted and leaned onto an adjacent structure following Friday's earthquake.**

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Hasan, professor of Urban and Regional Planning at Cuet.

Experts also identify indiscriminate groundwater extraction as another factor weakening the city's geological foundation.

"This removal of supporting water pressure causes the surface layer to displace and settle, thereby increasing the vulnerability of high-rise buildings," Dr Rashidul explained.

Experts say the current situation is the result of years of regulatory negligence.

During the 5.7 magnitude quake on November 21, a six-storey building in

Monsurabad tilted further towards an adjacent building. It had previously tilted during a 2016 quake, along with 11 other buildings in the city. A 6.1-magnitude earthquake in 1997 caused a five-storey building to collapse, killing over 20 people.

Small quakes, experts say, are often warnings of a major disaster.

"There is a risk of damage to 65–70 percent of multi-storey buildings in the port city in case of an earthquake of magnitude 7 to 8," said CDA chief engineer Kazi Hasan Bin Shams.

He said unlike Rajuk, CDA does not have a structural and design cell, and its manpower shortage makes regular inspections even more difficult.

Dr Rashidul said in Bangladesh, Chattogram and Sylhet fall in the highest-risk category. Yet many residents ignore building codes, and numerous buildings are constructed without proper expert supervision.

"CDA cannot avoid responsibility and must employ more manpower to monitor these irregularities," he added.

To minimise risks, Dr Rashidul emphasised identifying vulnerable buildings and retrofitting them with modern machinery and equipment.

Very old structures that cannot be repaired should be demolished, he said.

Residents, he stressed, must strictly follow building codes while constructing new buildings.

He also called for reducing groundwater extraction and prioritising the use of surface water.

Delwar Majumder, former president of the Institute of Engineers Bangladesh, Chattogram, said it is the duty of relevant government authorities to ensure compliance with building codes. "While we cannot construct fully earthquake-proof buildings due to high costs, we can at least make them earthquake-tolerant and minimise casualties," he said.

In Chattogram, the main concern is the lack of space for rescue due to the absence of emergency entry and exit routes in many buildings, he added.

Asked why the tilted buildings from the 2016 earthquake have not been demolished, the CDA chief engineer said the authority can only identify risky structures, not knock them down. Demolition is the responsibility of the Chattogram City Corporation.

"We have identified 100 risky buildings and submitted the list to CCC," he said.

Contacted, CCC Mayor Shahadat Hossain said he was not aware of the details. "I am speaking to my officials and will find out why the risky buildings have not yet been demolished," he said.

## Injured during Life inside DU female halls

FROM PAGE 3

the rest are men, he added.

He also said the hospital is providing the highest level of care and has made special arrangements to ensure extra attention for the patients.

Meanwhile, 66 people received treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital after being injured in the earthquake. Of them, five are still undergoing treatment.

"One of them is in the ICU. His condition is critical," said DMCH Director Brig Gen Md Asaduzzaman.

FROM PAGE 3

fell off in the canteen and other areas, while the Shikder Monoara Bhaban – housing 62 students – was declared safe by engineers.

Jannatul Ferdous Munni, a Philosophy student, said she panicked during the tremor while studying in the reading room. "There was shouting everywhere. I thought the building was collapsing. In the rush, I slipped on the stairs and fell," she said. Doctors have advised her 15 days of bed rest.

Dr Mahbuba Sultana, provost of the hall, visited all damaged areas and checked on the injured student. "The buildings are old, but engineers confirmed there is no immediate danger. We're doing our best to comfort the students," she

said. Security has been increased, and gates will remain locked only at night, with the main gate open.

At Shamsunnahar Hall, resident Marzia Zahana Momo said the tremor caused panic but no injuries. "Some areas developed cracks, and the chief engineer came to inspect everything," she said.

Sanzida Masud Momo, general secretary of the hall union, reported cracks in six washroom pillars in the Mid and Honours Buildings, one damaged room on the fifth floor, and plaster falling from several areas.

The Extension Building near the kitchen also developed cracks. The hall accommodates nearly 1,400 students, with around 96 on each floor.

Herem Akhter Era, social

welfare secretary of Sofia Kamal Hall Union, said the hall's four buildings sustained minor structural damage.

Prattayasha Building had cracks in one room; Pradipta Building saw damage in seven rooms and one common space; Prattay Building experienced cracks in two rooms and a corridor.

Each room houses six to eight students, while the only legal guest room accommodates 25 girls temporarily until they receive permanent rooms, she added.

The hall's provost Prof Salma Nasrin said engineers had checked all buildings. "By the grace of Allah, all my students are safe. There is no cause for concern, and the authorities will take the best steps for their safety," she said.

At Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall, VP Tasnim Akhter Alif Nabila said minor cracks were found, but there was no major structural damage. However, the chief engineer declared the house tutor's residential area unsafe due to the age of the building.

She added that all students were safe and no injuries occurred.

## Efforts on

FROM PAGE 3

He declared that NCP would remain on the streets to resist such "plots".

He also demanded swift execution of the death sentence handed to the ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, stating that she must be brought back to the country.

Nahid also criticised the Indian government for giving shelter to Hasina. He urged New Delhi to return her and rebuild ties with Dhaka.

NCP Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary said, "As long as we are alive, the Awami League will not be allowed to do politics. They must be brought under trial."

## 6 workers injured in boiler explosion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Six workers were injured in a boiler explosion at a cement factory in the Narayanganj port area last evening.

The incident occurred around 6:30pm at the Bashundhara Cement Factory at Madangonj in Bandar area.

The injured – Nahid Hasan, 22, Kamrul Hossain, 45, Tajul Islam, 35, Ferdous, 35, Torab Ali, 55, and Atikur Rahman, 42 – were admitted to the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery, said Abdullah Al Arefin, deputy assistant director of Narayanganj Fire Service and Civil Defence.

The fire official said, "Initially, the factory did not inform us about the incident. Later, when we

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

## IDP, Star, City Bank hold study expo



PHOTO: RASHED SHUNON

STAR REPORT

IDP Education Bangladesh, in association with The Daily Star and City Bank, organised the "Bangladesh Higher Study Expo 2025" yesterday at the Bangladesh China Friendship Conference Centre at Agargaon in Dhaka.

The expo was put together to inform students at all levels of education about study abroad prospects in popular destinations such as the US, the UK, Canada, and Australia. By consulting with experts who were present at the event, students could explore possible scholarship opportunities and pathways for their undergraduate and postgraduate education.

Renowned educational institutions from these locations participated in the expo, including The University of East Anglia; Deakin University; Columbia College Vancouver; Bowling Green State

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

## Heaps of waste pile up in front of health centre

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Traders from a local market have allegedly been dumping waste in front of Munshibazar Sub Health Complex in Kamalganj upazila of Moulvibazar.

Despite a signboard clearly prohibiting waste dumping on the health centre premises, the entrance along the busy Kamalganj-Moulvibazar road was found overwhelmed by heaps of garbage, causing annoyance among staff, patients, their attendants, and local residents.

"The environment here has become unbearable due to this menace," said Sadek Mia, a local resident.

Saddam Hosain, another resident, said the problem worsens during the monsoon, as waste spreads across the area after rain, heightening the risk of health hazards.

The situation has also affected classroom activities in a nearby primary school.

"The stench from the garbage piled up in front of the health centre makes it impossible for students to attend classes in a congenial atmosphere. Despite our repeated complaints, no action has been taken,"

said Aziz Ahmed, a teacher at the school.

Himel Chowdhury, president of the Munshibazar Traders Association, said traders have been discarding their waste on the roadside due to the absence of a designated dumping site.

Nahid Ahmed Tarafdar, chairman of Munshibazar Union Parishad, said the matter had been raised with the upazila law and order committee. "We are in talks with the UNO for a prompt solution," he said.

Mohammad Mahbulul Alam Bhuiyan, upazila health and family planning officer in Kamalganj, said they had already informed the market authorities and local officials about the need to remove the waste. "We will continue to follow up to ensure the issue is addressed," he said.

Contacted, Kamalganj UNO Makhon Chandra Sutradhar said, "This is a serious issue. We will engage with the relevant authorities and take necessary steps to resolve it."

**PLOT SALE**  
A plot is available for sale in the Baridhara Diplomatic Zone. Interested and genuine buyers are warmly invited to contact for further details.  
**Contact: 01973456904**

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**ইনস্টিটিউট অব বাংলাদেশ স্টাডিজ**  
**রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়**  
**নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ইনস্টিটিউট অব বাংলাদেশ স্টাডিজ নিম্নলিখিত শূন্য পদসমূহ পূরণের জন্য বাংলাদেশি নাগরিকদের নিকট থেকে দরখাস্ত আবেদন করা যাচ্ছে।

পদের নাম ও সংখ্যা	বিষয়ের নাম ও সংখ্যা	বেতন স্কেল
ফেলো (সহকারী অধ্যাপক)-০১/সহযোগী অধ্যাপক-০২টি	ইতিহাস-১, ইংরেজি-১, রস্ট্রবিজ্ঞান-১, অর্থনীতি-১, ভূগোল-১, ফোকলোর-১, আইন-১, নৃ-বিজ্ঞান-১, মনোবিজ্ঞান-১	ফেলো (সহকারী অধ্যাপক): ৩৫,৫০০-৬৭,০১০/- এবং ৮ম জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল ২০১৫ অনুযায়ী প্রচলিত ভাতাদি। সহযোগী অধ্যাপক: ৫০,০০০/- ৭১,২০০/- এবং ৮ম জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল ২০১৫ অনুযায়ী প্রচলিত ভাতাদি।

উপর্যুক্ত প্রতিটি পদসমূহে নিয়োগের জন্য শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা এবং আবেদন সম্পর্কিত বিস্তারিত বিবরণ রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের <https://www.ru.ac.bd/ibs/advertisement/>-তে পাওয়া যাবে। আবেদনপত্র ডাউনলোড করে পূরণ পূর্বক সম্পন্ন করে ১১ (এগারো) সেট দরখাস্ত আগামী ২৮-১২-২৫ তারিখ বিকাল ৪টার মধ্যে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর দপ্তরে জমা দিতে হবে। প্রতি পদের জন্য প্রতি সেট দরখাস্তের সাথে সকল প্রকার শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার নথিপত্র ও সার্টিফিকেট, চাকুরিত প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমতিপত্র, চাকুরির অভিজ্ঞতার সার্টিফিকেট, সকল প্রকার পবেষামূলক প্রবন্ধের কপি, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের কপি সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।

প্রফেসর ড. এম. মোহাম্মদ কামাল  
পরিচালক

GD-2524

**North-West Power Generation Company Ltd**  
ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015 & ISO 45001:2018 Certified  
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

**Office of the Plant Manager (Superintending Engineer)**  
Sirajganj 225 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant (Unit-2)  
Soydabad, Sirajganj.

**Ref: 27.28.8878.201.07.001.21.319** **Date: 22/11/2025**

**e-Tender Notice**

The following e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)):

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Brief Description of Tender	Publication Date	Last Selling Date & Time	Opening Date
1	1160180	Procurement of GTG, GT Transformers, Protection and PCC Room electrical equipment's and spares	16-Nov-2025	07-Dec-2025 15:30 PM	08-Dec-2025

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP Help Desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

**Engr. Md. Abu Zafar Siddique**  
Plant Manager (Superintending Engineer)  
Sirajganj 225 MW CCPP (Unit-2)  
NWPGL, Soydabad, Sirajganj.

GD-2527





# Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board

Power Division, Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources  
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Memo No. 27.12.8549.187.97.001.25-937

Date: 20/11/2025

## e-Tender Notice (OTM)

e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for Maintenance works of Office Building, C-Type Building, F-Type Building and Repairing works of Internal Road at O&M Complex under the SE, BREB, Rangpur Zone. Tender security amount will be in the form of Bank Draft/Pay-Order in favor of Superintending Engineer, BREB Rangpur Zone. Tender submission deadlines are mentioned below:

SL. No.	Package No.	Description of works	Tender ID No.	Closing date	Closing time
01.	BREB-SE-RNG-W-03	Maintenance works of Office Building, C-Type Building, F-Type Building and Repairing works of Internal Road at O&M Complex under BREB, Uttam, Hazirhat, Rangpur.	1180823	08-12-2025	12:00
Eligibility of tenderer		As per TDS. (JV not allowed.)			

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any e-GP registered banks branches for Tender ID: 1180823 up to 07.12.2025 at 17:00pm. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

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বাংলাদেশ পল্লী বিদ্যুতায়ন বোর্ড  
Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board

**Md. Rezaul Karim**

Superintending Engineer

Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board  
Rangpur Zone, Uttam, Hazirhat, Rangpur  
Phone: 02588810789

E-mail: [sebrebmg@gmail.com](mailto:sebrebmg@gmail.com)

বাপবিবো/জন (২৫১১-৬৩) ২০২৫-২০২৬

GD-2525

GD-2525



# Is our city waiting to collapse?

After Friday’s earthquake, authorities must start urgent preparation

The enemy is no longer at the gates; it is already on our doorstep. It is now anyone's guess when it will finally breach the door. In the wake of Friday's 5.7 magnitude earthquake, a terrifying question has emerged: is the capital built to stand, or merely waiting to collapse? The answer was grimly illustrated in the chaotic warrens of Old Dhaka. There, a railing collapsed, killing three people and raising the total death toll to 10.

The proximity of the earthquake changes the calculus of survival. With an epicentre in Madhabdi, a mere 13 kilometres from Dhaka, the geological threat is no longer distant. It was shallow, releasing its energy close to the surface. Such tremors wreak particular havoc on mid-rise structures—the four-to-eight-storey residential buildings that make up most of Dhaka’s urban sprawl, according to experts. These buildings, often constructed on filled wetlands with scant regard for engineering codes, are potential coffins. Historical trends suggest that 7.0 magnitude earthquakes recur in this region every century, and it has been over 100 years since the last one. As a BUET professor has suggested, the geological clock is ticking. A major rupture now could flatten a third of Dhaka city and kill thousands of people.

The tragedy is that this fragility is engineered. RAJUK, the agency tasked with regulating the capital's development, has long functioned more as a facilitator of real-estate chaos than a guardian of public safety. Wetlands have been concreted over. Building rules remain fluid, bent to accommodate the commercial whims of developers who squeeze square footage out of narrow plots. As an expert at the Bangladesh Institute of Planners points out, even the minimum space between buildings is often erased from the final plans.

During a visit to Old Dhaka on Saturday, the chairman of RAJUK offered a dismal diagnosis of urban development. He admitted that developers treat enforcement as a minor inconvenience: when authorities cut utility lines to halt illegal construction, builders simply switch to generators or stolen connections. But his threat to seal the earthquake-damaged Armanitola building if papers are not produced within seven days rings hollow against a backdrop of decades of loose governance. RAJUK’s strategy remains reactive, its enforcement porous.

So to minimise devastation after another strong earthquake, the government must embrace both economics and rigour. The RAJUK chairman's suggestion that owners of tiny plots should build joint, legal structures seems to be sound urban economics. Larger plots allow for the necessary engineering tolerances that are physically impossible on smaller parcels of land. But good economics requires good policing. The proposal by experts to introduce third-party verification of building designs, following the model of Indonesia and Thailand, is an essential stopgap for a regulator that has lost its way.

History offers a grim footnote to this urgency as Bangladesh is bracing for something far worse. By a cruel coincidence, Friday’s quake occurred on the exact anniversary of the 1997 Chittagong earthquake, which killed several people. But looking back is a luxury. If Friday’s was indeed a foreshock, with two subsequent tremors on Saturday, the window for action is closing. The government must immediately mandate inspections of all mid-rise buildings and enforce the “Red-Yellow-Green” safety coding system. To ignore the warning is to be complicit in the disaster to come.

# Salinity is poisoning our water and soil

## Stop unregulated shrimp farming, take other necessary steps

A recent *Daily Star* report once again highlights the devastating impact of salinity in Bangladesh's southwestern districts, particularly Satkhira and Khulna. Across the country's 19 coastal districts, high salt concentrations in soil and water are disrupting lives and livelihoods. Salinity has become one of the region's most severe environmental challenges, one that the government must treat as an urgent health, economic, and social crisis.

While climate change is a major cause for reduced upstream flow, rising sea levels, and cyclones, the reckless and unhindered shrimp industry has created a human-induced environmental disaster. Agricultural land has lost fertility and can no longer produce rice and vegetables. Much of it has been converted into shrimp enclosures, allowing saltwater to seep into the groundwater. According to a government report, around 62 percent of coastal land is now affected by salinity.

Embankments built to protect soil from salinity and tidal surges have, in many cases, caused more harm than good by blocking natural tidal flows. This has led to waterlogging and weakened the natural flushing mechanisms that push saltwater back into the sea, resulting in further soil and water degradation. But it is the unregulated shrimp farming since the 1980s that has deepened the crisis. It has benefited only a handful, while the majority of small farmers have lost their land to excessive salinity. These small farmers and day labourers are now forced to survive on meagre wages, pushing them further into poverty.

The health cost of this crisis is also dire. Procuring safe drinking water has become a major challenge, with women and girls often having to travel miles to fetch potable water. Prolonged exposure to saline water and its consumption are causing a range of health conditions, including preeclampsia among pregnant women. What is most shocking is that successive governments have allowed shrimp farming to expand without any regulation or enforcement of environmental laws to protect the soil and water.

We urge the interim government to begin addressing this crisis without delay. Environmental experts have already outlined clear steps. The most urgent is regulating shrimp farming to stop the conversion of cropland and the intrusion of saltwater. Other key measures include expanding infrastructure to bring in more freshwater, promoting rainwater harvesting at household and community levels, deploying desalination technology for drinking water, introducing climate-smart agricultural practices such as salt-tolerant crops and water-efficient methods, and designing gender-sensitive water policies to help women and girls in particular. Our policy must reflect the urgency of addressing salinity in these regions, as millions of lives and livelihoods are at stake.

# Dhaka’s earthquake danger ignored for too long



Monira Sharmin is an independent researcher who currently serves as joint convener at the National Citizen Party (NCP).

MONIRA SHARMIN

Did you ever hear about the earthquake epicentre in Narsingdi prior to the November 21 incident? On Friday, at least 10 people, including two children, were killed and several hundred injured after a 5.7-magnitude earthquake shook Dhaka, nearby districts, and other parts of the country, cracking buildings, sending debris crashing down, and driving panicked residents into the streets. Narsingdi alone recorded five deaths. For many, this was the first real experience of the earth's raw power. While the shaking lasted only a few seconds, its impact revealed just how vulnerable even near-urban areas are to seismic disasters. It was also a wake-up call for us to identify the blind faults, among other priorities.

A blind fault is one that leaves no visible scars on the landscape and does not fracture the surface. These faults can cause large earthquakes but are obscured by conventional geological surveys. Unlike well-known fault lines, their very invisibility makes them uniquely dangerous. The odds that such hidden structures exist beneath densely populated areas are increased by recent tremors in central Bangladesh, which is far from the well-mapped Dauki or Madhupur faults. Because Bangladesh is situated on soft alluvial soils and between tectonic boundaries, experts have long cautioned about the country's vulnerability to earthquakes.

Numerous experts and public voices had expressed concern about our lack of preparedness even before the Friday earthquake and the tremors that followed. Dhaka's building stock is particularly vulnerable due to weak inspection systems, construction on reclaimed wetlands, and non-compliance with the Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC).

In a megacity like Dhaka, an earthquake would not occur in isolation but would rather set off a chain of cascading disasters, rendering the catastrophe far deadlier than the initial tremor. Dhaka exemplifies a multi-hazard risk environment due to its high population density, unregulated urban expansion, soft soil issues, outdated infrastructure, and con strained road networks. A quake could quickly initiate fires from ruptured gas lines, structural failures, obstructed roads, hazardous spills, electrical failures, water supply breakdowns, and urban flooding from broken pipelines. These secondary risks can quickly intensify, burdening emergency responders and ensnaring inhabitants.

Worldwide experience demonstrates that the highest mortality rates typically result from the cascading events following an earthquake, rather

than from the quake alone. In Japan, the lethal firestorms and fire whirl that devastated Tokyo and Yokohama after the 1923 Great Kanto earthquake claimed more lives than the violent shaking itself, highlighting how swiftly urban disasters can escalate into overwhelming calamities. Dhaka encounters similar threats—a single peril can trigger numerous others, escalating a significant earthquake



Rescuers in action after an earthquake hit Dhaka and other districts on November 21, 2025.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

into a complex, multi-dimensional catastrophe that surpasses our existing readiness level.

Against this backdrop, what's most worrying is that planning at the national level has not kept up. Despite the existence of seismic zoning maps, their enforcement is still lax, and some older but densely populated neighbourhoods have never had their risk looked at. This lack of readiness is not hypothetical. A significant earthquake could turn Dhaka into a “death trap” if prompt action is not taken. In the meantime, experts in urban planning advise decentralising the capital to lower the risk of catastrophe.

Although blind faults cannot be avoided, their harm can be lessened if Bangladesh can take decisive action. To identify blind-fault activity early, we need to increase seismic monitoring by installing a denser network of seismometers throughout Dhaka, Narsingdi, and other high-risk areas. Strict enforcement of the building code is necessary to

or low-frequency EM disturbances. These gaps do not mean total absence, but rather insufficient coverage and integration, which exacerbates the preparedness deficit at a time when hidden faults and urban vulnerabilities demand enhanced alertness.

Our earthquake vulnerability is rooted in unsafe, non-compliant buildings and fragile urban systems, especially in Dhaka, Old Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur, and other industrial zones, making structural safety the first national priority. This requires forming a dedicated Building Regulatory Authority (BRA) to enforce the BNBC nationwide, conducting city-wide structural surveys to classify buildings as safe or risky, retrofitting critical public infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, police and fire stations, enforcing a National Seismic Design and Retrofitting Roadmap, installing automatic gas and electric shutoff systems to prevent post-quake fires, and decentralising lifelines like blood banks, fuel reserves, and medical

with INSARAG-compliant rescue protocols, and regularly updating laws, regulations, SOD, and contingency plans based on new scientific insights.

Finally, to save lives after impact, the country must develop Light, Medium, and Heavy USAR teams, pre-position rescue and medical resources nationwide, expand field hospitals and mobile surgical units, establish a robust mass casualty and dignified dead body management system, enforce a National Debris Management Policy to reopen mobility corridors within hours, and secure emergency restoration of water, electricity, and gas lines through bypass systems.

The fate of a megacity facing a potential major earthquake depends on its level of preparation, scientific insight, and coordinated action. Without these, an earthquake could escalate into an unprecedented human tragedy, but with them, it can be transformed into a manageable emergency, saving countless lives and preserving critical infrastructure.

# Gaza tragedy and a mockery of a ceasefire



Yousef SY Ramadan is the ambassador of Palestine to Bangladesh.

YUSEF SY RAMADAN

Day after day, it becomes clear that the announcement of the Sharm El-Sheikh summit in October 2025 “to stop the war” was not intended to save civilians in Gaza Strip, but was instead a new episode in a series of political games played at the expense of the Palestinians’ humanitarian tragedy. The Trump administration did not seek to save the people of Gaza from genocide; it wanted to ensure that Israel was saved from international isolation and to rebuild its regional and global image after its racist crimes were exposed. The announcement of a “ceasefire” was more like a political cover to shield the Tel Aviv government than a genuine attempt to protect civilians in Gaza. Since the announcement, neither the raids nor the killing of innocents have stopped. The Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza has recorded the deaths of at least 312 people, most of them children, in addition to thousands wounded, while the entire strip remains under direct fire.

Thousands of wounded people are still prevented from travelling for treatment outside Gaza. Partially functioning hospitals can barely cope

with the huge and growing numbers of critical cases, including life-altering injuries and the deaths of patients who have been denied even the most basic medicines. About 25 percent of the injured now face permanent disabilities due to a lack of medical equipment and the inability to treat complex injuries.

While international media attention is focused on a limited number of recovered Israeli bodies, the fate of the Palestinians is being ignored. Some Palestinian bodies have been returned bearing signs of torture; others have been robbed; and the bodies of many who have been missing for decades are still held in secret graves or occupation refrigerators. At the same time, reports of torture prisons continue to emerge, going beyond even the horrors already exposed in Sde Teiman prison, where systematic violations have been committed against Palestinian detainees, including rape.

With the onset of winter, the suffering of the people is worsening. Camps for displaced families have been flooded with rainwater, and tents have become inundated and largely uninhabitable. The severe cold,

combined with these dire conditions, has claimed the lives of children, the sick, and the elderly. Thousands of families now live without any form of protection, amid the continuation of the siege and the frequent obstruction of humanitarian aid.

Despite the tight siege, media and diplomatic reports have revealed systematic displacement through the so-called Ramon Airport, facilitated by fake and intelligence-linked companies. Dozens of Palestinians have suddenly arrived in South Africa, and there are reports of other shadowy agencies connected to Estonia flying Palestinians out. These “mystery flights” indicate Israel’s intention to continue silent ethnic cleansing, which explains its insistence on maintaining the siege and denying Gaza even the most basic elements of life.

In this context, I have issued several statements to various Bangladeshi media outlets about the seriousness of this displacement through Ramon Airport, warning against exploiting the close relations and fraternal sympathy that bind the people of Bangladesh to Palestine. The most recent of these warnings came during my press conference regarding female students from Gaza, held on August 14, 2025.

In the West Bank, settler terrorism against the people in Palestinian villages and towns continues. Settlers, backed by the official support of the Israeli government and army, carry out frequent attacks on civilians, burn homes, and gradually displace residents, while Israeli security services cooperate with them, entrenching a

policy of slow demographic cleansing.

Washington has pushed a draft resolution through the United Nations Security Council, calling it a “Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict,” but in reality it only aims to satisfy Israel by deploying international forces to complete what the occupation has failed to achieve. It is not designed to protect civilians from continuous crimes. The resolution also entrenches the division of Gaza into a besieged and destroyed west and east, where reconstruction is conditional and politically manipulated. Moreover, it further cements the separation of Gaza from the West Bank and Jerusalem, undermining the Palestinian national entity, deepening political division, and further fragmenting Palestinian representation.

Here we must emphasise the essential role played by Saudi Arabia and France as sponsors of the conference on implementing the two-state solution, held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York in September 2025 and supported by the majority of the world’s countries—with the exception of the United States and Israel. What offers Palestinians a degree of reassurance is the Kingdom's firm stance on the two-state solution. During a joint press conference with President Trump two days ago, the Saudi crown prince reaffirmed his country's firm stance on the matter. Though hope is an existential necessity for the present and the future, caution is also essential until Palestine and its people achieve real freedom and independence.



# How victimhood distorts our sense of history



Asif Bin Ali is a doctoral fellow at Georgia State University, USA. He can be reached at abinali2@gsu.edu.

ASIF BIN ALI

Why have we failed to build a strong state, durable institutions, and a shared story of coexistence? I look for answers in the histories we write, or tell ourselves, and the ways they shape our character as a nation. Again and again, we see the same pattern: we often cast ourselves only as victims, rushing to ask who betrayed us or which outside power conspired. The story of victimhood is an uncomplicated one, like a linear film plot: simple to narrate, easy to understand, and comforting to believe. But this unquestioning resignation to an easy story prevents us from asking hard questions about our own role in history and our culpability.

Let us examine the narrative of the Battle of Plassey fought on June 23, 1757. The familiar story is that Mir Jafar betrayed Nawab Sirajuddaula, and that Jagat Seth, Rai Durlabh, and Yar Lutuf Khan sold him out to Robert Clive. This is, however, only a small part of the bigger picture: the Mughal Empire was already collapsing, Bengal's succession after Alivardi Khan was disputed, the administration was weak, the revenue system rotten, the army outdated, and the financial base broken. So the East India Company walked into a house that was already falling down—a house we rarely examine critically because the victim story feels easier to comprehend. While we were playing the victim game, in Europe, Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) was asking how wealth is produced. At that time, many of our nawabs and zamindars spent heavily on palaces, courts, music, and spectacle, while treating investment in new knowledge, technology, military reform, and

social attitudes towards overseas travel. Texts like the *Baudhayana Dharmasutra* were invoked to support this view, turning overseas travel for trade, education, or politics into a social risk for many high-caste groups. Bengali Muslims, for their part, did not build lasting maritime trade networks either; unlike the Portuguese, Dutch, French, or British, our merchants never created sea-borne trading empires. Their ships came from the other side, and we settled into the role of consumers of those ships and their goods.

We often say the British ruled through a “divide and rule” policy. While they did use Hindu-Muslim, caste, ethnic, language, and regional lines to govern, the cracks they exploited—caste and sub-caste, high and low orders, Ashraf and Atraf, landlord and peasant, town and village—were already there; colonial rule merely fixed them in law through censuses, land laws, and separate electorates. In 1947, we again placed blame on “Hindus” or “Muslims,” refusing to explore underlying nuances. The Partition uprooted well over 10 million people and killed several million through riots, hunger, and disease. These outcomes were shaped by decades of communal politics and tensions as well as administrative weaknesses of the two new states. Our textbooks mostly blame “them,” but if Muslims killed Hindus and Hindus killed Muslims, the real question is whether we are ready to face our own share of those crimes instead of hiding them.

Pakistan emerged in 1947, but instead of focusing on building institutions, its politics quickly slid into court intrigue. A

seized control in a coup, suspending the constitution. Many still say “external powers destabilised Pakistan,” but the first coup-maker was a Muslim general backed by local elites. At the same time, religious leaders were busy with anti Ahmadi campaigns: in 1953, they led agitations in Punjab and Lahore that forced the imposition of martial law in Lahore, and in 1974, the Second Amendment formally declared Ahmadis non-Muslim.

below. The idea that “the poor are innocent” does not survive close inspection either. When people at the lower rungs gain some power, they are also as likely to oppress those weaker than themselves.

Many Bangladeshi historians and intellectuals have reinforced this habit of seeing ourselves only as victims. The genocide of 1971, the crimes of the Pakistani army and their allies, and international indifference

to Dhaka to shout for death sentences, they could ask why teachers are suspending class lessons to use them as a crowd; when a schoolteacher takes attendance and then spends the class on their phone, parents and students could question this neglect. Instead, we invariably fall back on blaming some outside conspiracy or influence. My point is simple: “We are oppressed” is not a lie—colonial rule, military rule, and state



Even after the 2024 uprising that toppled an authoritarian regime, we as a nation remain trapped in the same cycles of victimhood and blame, struggling to focus on the hard work of state-building.

FILE PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

**Many Bangladeshi historians and intellectuals have reinforced this habit of seeing ourselves only as victims. The genocide of 1971, the crimes of the Pakistani army and their allies, and international indifference were all real, but we rarely ask with equal seriousness how we built the new state, who gained from it, and who was left out.**

proper administration as a side concern, as if old habits were enough to keep up with a changing world.

We also had the sea in front of us, but the idea of *kala pani*—the belief that crossing the sea would threaten ritual status—shaped

full constitution came only in 1956; the 1949 Objectives Resolution spoke of Islamic principles, yet little was done to establish stable democratic practices. The Muslim elite used Islam for power, and within two years of that first constitution, Ayub Khan

While we keep repeating that “Muslims are always victims,” these developments show how a group of Muslims used law and street pressure to deny another community equal citizenship.

At this point, some may argue, “Oppression was in the cities; the villages were fine.” Our imagination of the village remains highly romantic: that rural Bengal is/was peaceful, equal, beautiful. Yet in 1948, speaking at the Indian Constituent Assembly, Dr B.R. Ambedkar described the village as the nursery of localism, ignorance, narrow-mindedness, and communalism, a place where caste oppression was reproduced. This is not only about Hindu villages. In Muslim villages, too, those who have power pressed down on those

were all real, but we rarely ask with equal seriousness how we built the new state, who gained from it, and who was left out. In 2024, a student-led mass uprising toppled the Sheikh Hasina government, and an interim administration led by Dr Muhammad Yunus took charge, yet public debate quickly slid back to old labels such as “pro-India,” “anti-Islam,” and “traitor,” and to suspicion over who is plotting with whom. Once again, issues of land, wages, education, health, law, and justice moved to the side, as if every change of regime must be reduced to choosing a fresh victim and a fresh villain, while the hard work of state-building remains untouched.

Ordinary citizens share the burden of responsibility as well. When, for instance, thousands of madrasa students are taken

violence are indeed facts—but as citizens we have also helped, actively or silently, in the continuation of oppression. As long as our histories place all guilt on “the British,” “the Hindus,” “the Muslims,” “India,” “Pakistan,” or “the West,” while hiding the greed of our own elites, our political shortsightedness, and our moral weaknesses, we are dirtying the mirror in which we should be examining ourselves.

We have to do two things at once: clean up our public narratives in which all fault lies with “them,” the other, and clean up our own conduct, starting with a frank admission that we are at once victims and makers of our own victimhood. Only then can a real political conversation begin.

## Matiul Islam: A legacy of service, integrity, and love

Parveen Mahmud is a former president of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB).

PARVEEN MAHMUD

It is with profound sorrow that we remember M Matiul Islam, the first finance secretary of Bangladesh, who passed away on Thursday, November 20, at the age of 95. In a life spanning nearly a century, he made indelible contributions to the financial and administrative systems of our country. A visionary architect of our financial system, he was a disciplined civil servant, a skilled chartered accountant, a writer, an entrepreneur, and, more recently, a devoted Tagore singer. He embodied the essence of a multifaceted personality—constantly evolving, yet always grounded in his principles.

Mr Islam was known for his impeccable character, professionalism, and punctuality. He was always well-dressed, attended office on time, and brought energy to every room he entered. Even in his later years, he maintained a sharp mind and a tireless work ethic. What stood out most, however, was his unyielding commitment to his work and his colleagues, coupled with a deep sense of inquiry and a remarkable logical clarity. I had the privilege of knowing him both personally and professionally, and he was, without a doubt, a source of inspiration for me.

On numerous occasions, Mr Islam helped and mentored me, often without my even asking. His selflessness and generosity were evident in everything he did. I particularly remember his proactive approach in assisting me whenever I needed to organise professional programmes. He would often enquire on his own whether I had secured commitments from the chief guest and other distinguished speakers for events. His concern was not just about ensuring the event's success, but also about ensuring that everything went smoothly and according to



M Matiul Islam (1930-2025)

plan.

One of the most striking examples of his dedication and resourcefulness occurred during a meeting I attended at Yunus Centre, where the managing directors of Grameen's various companies gathered under the chairmanship of Prof Muhammad Yunus, presently chief adviser of the interim government. It was during lunch that I received an unexpected message: that the then finance minister, who was scheduled to attend the event as chief guest later that evening, had fallen ill and would no longer be able to attend. In a moment of panic, I stepped outside the meeting room for a few minutes to make an urgent call to Matiul Islam, hoping he might be able to assist in some way.

Without hesitation, he reassured me, saying, “Don't worry, I will handle it.” Within a short span of time, he took charge of the situation. Not only did he manage to arrange a new chief guest, but he also

ensured that all other special guests were invited in line with the event's protocol. His calm demeanour and quick thinking in that critical moment demonstrated the depth of his experience and his ability to manage even the most challenging situations.

Matiul Islam's contributions to Bangladesh's economic and administrative systems go beyond the confines of any one particular role. In 1968-69, when he served as secretary of the industries and commerce ministry, he was appointed acting district commissioner of Khulna in addition to his regular responsibilities. Despite the demands of his primary role, he managed both positions with remarkable skill and dedication. His leadership was instrumental in driving governance reforms and spurring economic development in the region. Though he was a qualified chartered accountant, he did not shy away from administrative challenges. He adeptly balanced the technical aspects of

his profession with the strategic oversight required for large-scale development projects. His ability to navigate complex situations and make sound decisions earned him the respect and admiration of his colleagues and subordinates alike.

It is these qualities—clarity of thought, steadfastness in decision-making, and a quiet yet profound influence—that ensure Mr Islam's legacy endures. He was not one to seek the limelight, but his work spoke volumes. He approached every task with a sense of purpose and a deep commitment to the betterment of society. His integrity, humility, and the enduring impact of his work will continue to inspire generations to come.

In remembering Mr Islam, we must also remember his beloved wife, Zohra Islam, who passed away in 2021 at the age of 84. Zohra *bhabi* was a self-taught artist whose intricate flower paintings were a testament to her talent. Her work, which numbered over 50 pieces, was generously donated to the United Nations Women's Guild, where it

individuals and the causes she supported.

What stands out about Zohra Islam is not just her artistic talent but the profound partnership she shared with Matiul Islam. After her passing, he experienced a deep sense of loneliness. I recall visiting him after Zohra *bhabi*'s death. As I took a photograph during that visit, I noticed that Mr Islam had chosen to sit near one of her paintings, which was displayed prominently in the background. It struck me as a quiet tribute to the love they had shared, a love that transcended time and circumstances, remaining an inseparable part of Mr Islam's life even after her departure.

In the years that followed her passing, Mr Islam often spoke of Zohra with deep affection. His memories of her were precious, and he carried them with him in a way that was both tender and dignified. The deep bond they shared was a testament to their mutual respect, love, and the quiet strength they drew from one another.

So, as we bid farewell to M Matiul Islam, we must also honour the memory of Zohra

**Matiul Islam's contributions to Bangladesh's economic and administrative systems go beyond the confines of any one particular role. In 1968-69, when he served as secretary of the industries and commerce ministry, he was appointed acting district commissioner of Khulna in addition to his regular responsibilities. Despite the demands of his primary role, he managed both positions with remarkable skill and dedication. His leadership was instrumental in driving governance reforms and spurring economic development in the region.**

helped raise funds for children around the world. She was a woman of quiet strength, and her artistic endeavours reflected the deep love she had for nature and the world around her. Though she never sought recognition, her legacy is deeply felt through the impact her art had on countless

Islam. May they both rest in peace, their love, wisdom, and the enduring legacy of their lives forever etched in our hearts. Their contributions to Bangladesh, to their family, and to all those whose lives they touched will stay with us for many years to come.

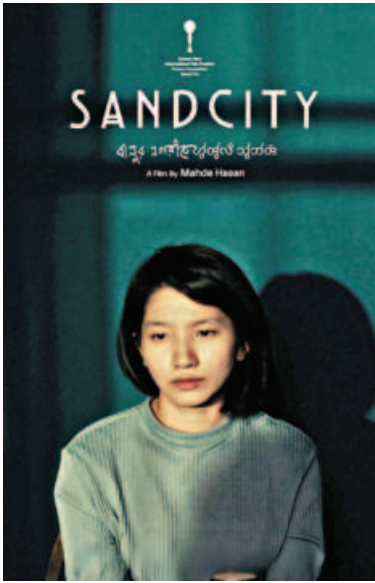


## ‘Sand City’ wins award at Cairo International Film Festival

On Friday, the Cairo International Film Festival announced this year's winners and cinematographer Mathieu Giombini won the Henry Barakat Award for Best Artistic Contribution for Bangladeshi film *Sand City*, directed by Mahde Hasan, in the International Competition category.

The film recently had its Africa and Arab premiere at the Grand Hall of the Cairo Opera House. It is produced by Rubaiyat Hossain and Aadnan Imtiaz Ahmed under Khona Talkies, in association with Cinema Cocoon.

It follows two characters bound by their connection to sand. Emma (Victoria Chakma) discovers a severed finger while collecting cat litter, triggering a dark and unsettling obsession. Meanwhile, Hasan (Mostafa Monwar) steals sand from a washing plant to make glass at home, gradually losing himself in a dangerous fantasy of building a glass empire. The film earlier won the Proxima Grand Prix at the 59th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival.



PHOTOS: NAVEEN ISLAM TOREE

## MINIATURE DHAKA Inside ‘City of Memories’ by Kazi Salahuddin Ahmed

NAVEEN ISLAM TOREE

In the quiet corners of Alliance Française, a small cluster of canvases invites viewers into a Dhaka that no longer exists — or perhaps one that exists only in memory. In *City of Memories*, Kazi Salahuddin Ahmed turns the familiar chaos of our own Old Dhaka into intimate, abstract landscapes, painted to recall the magic of the city.

The exhibition was inaugurated on Tuesday, November 18, 2025, at the Alliance Française's Gulshan premises and will continue until November 29. With more than 140 miniature works on display, the opening ceremony—graced by diplomats, artists, and long-time admirers—set the tone for an exploration into Salahuddin's vibrant abstraction of the city.

These small works — some barely six inches across — pull you in with an embrace of nostalgia. Each square seems to hold a neighbourhood, a lane, a rooftop, a young boy's vantage point of Old Dhaka before its colours faded and its rooftops were replaced by concrete towers.

As someone who turns to painting for solace, I was enchanted by how these



miniatures held such big truths about what we are losing with time. The artist avoids literal representation completely; these scenes don't imitate the city so much as remember it. The textures recall broken plaster, eroded walls or old rooftops collapsing into colour—vivid in some places and blurred in others.

Salahuddin considers himself a child raised while being cradled in the arms of Old Dhaka—with all its chaos, heritage and changing rhythm. To portray that, he used multicolor to express the extravagance of festivities such as—Eid, Durga puja or Shakraim. He sounds almost melancholic when he says, “I don't go to my childhood home anymore. I feel like we are inside a well of some sort. It is that dark because of the buildings around.” He worries about the rapid, unplanned development swallowing the city and believes decentralisation must enter the national planning conversation.

In a city where heritage is often swallowed whole by development, these tiny works feel like acts of preservation. They are reminders that cities are not built only of concrete and steel, but of textures, sounds, and fleeting images stored in the mind.

More than anything, *City of Memories* reads like a love letter—one written in the language of abstraction. Salahuddin's Dhaka is not perfect, polished or neatly arranged. It is messy, broken, sunlit, rusted and alive. It carries the debris of time and the glow of continuity.

## Eddie Murphy to receive AFI life achievement award

The American Film Institute announced Friday that Eddie Murphy will receive its prestigious life achievement award. The comedy legend will be honoured at a special ceremony on April 18 at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.

Murphy has dominated the entertainment world for almost five decades. He started as a teenage stand-up comedian before joining the cast of *Saturday Night Live*. He then became a box office powerhouse with blockbuster films including *Beverly Hills Cop*, *Coming to America*, *The Nutty Professor* and the *Shrek* franchise.

In 2007, Murphy earned an Oscar nomination for best supporting actor for his role in *Dreamgirls*. He becomes the 51st person to receive the AFI life achievement award since it was first presented to director John Ford in 1973.



### WHAT'S THE HAPS?

## ‘Horror Folklore Fest Dhaka 2025’

*Horror Folklore Fest Dhaka 2025* brings global horror icons and Bangladeshi ghost stories together in one thrilling event.

From Dracula's immortal menace to Sadako's cursed silence, and *Shakchunni* (witch) from Bengal's village tales, the event transforms the place into an immersive realm of shadows and superstition. It is a fun mix of fear, fantasy, and folklore for anyone who loves spooky stories.

DATE: FRIDAY| NOVEMBER 28, 2025

TIME: 12 PM – 8 PM

VENUE: TOKYO SQUARE CONVENTION CENTER



## NEWS

### MoUs inked

FROM PAGE 12  
trade agreement in 2020.

The visiting Bhutanese PM stressed the need for deeper trade and economic cooperation. “If we have to prosper, we must prosper together,” he said.

The two leaders also agreed to establish a joint working group to promote two-way tourism, said a statement of the Chief Adviser's Press Wing.

Bhutan is developing a major economic hub, the Gelephu Mindfulness City, and sought Bangladesh's cooperation, including space in Narayanganj for loading and unloading Bhutanese cargo, Tobgay said.

Bhutan is a key part of Dhaka's vision for a regional trade and economic cooperation, Yunus said, adding that he had instructed officials to clear Bhutanese containers as quickly as possible.

Yunus also invited Bhutanese nationals to avail themselves of healthcare services and medical education at the 1,000-bed hospital and a medical college in the northern district of Nilphamari that is under construction.

Following the formal talks, Bangladesh and Bhutan signed two memoranda of understanding: one on healthcare services and the other on the trade of international internet bandwidth.

Under the internet bandwidth agreement, Bhutan will import bandwidth from Bangladesh.

Yunus expressed hope that more Bangladeshi doctors and healthcare workers will now be able to work in Bhutan, particularly in the upcoming new economic city of Gelephu, now under development in the Himalayan kingdom.

Bangladesh also announced an increased number of seats for Bhutanese students in Bangladeshi medical colleges and earmarked seats in BUET.

The two leaders also discussed prospects for Bangladesh to import hydropower from Bhutan, including the possibility of a trilateral agreement involving India to facilitate electricity trade.

### Suspect dies

FROM PAGE 12  
in Sirajganj, said Shahadat was an asthma patient and fell ill during interrogation. “He was taken to Sirajganj General Hospital, where he unfortunately died.”

He added that they have formed a three-member committee to investigate the death and that a departmental inquiry is also underway.

## Why rush to hand over terminals to foreign

FROM PAGE 12

The government, shamelessly and with a smiling face, is continuing the initiatives taken by the ousted Sheikh Hasina government related to port, said Muhammad, also former member secretary of National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports.

“Thus, it is pushing Bangladesh into a grave danger.”

While the interim government has shown great eagerness in moving forward with this agreement, it has not shown the same level of urgency in addressing other national issues such as shrine vandalism, violence against women or mob attacks, he added.

The recent decision by the interim government to sign long-term port agreements with foreign companies raises serious questions about transparency, accountability and the legal propriety of such actions, said Jyotirmoy Barua, a Supreme Court lawyer.

He expressed concern that the government has proceeded with contracts spanning 30 to 40 years without making the documents fully public, citing legal complexities as justification.

According to him, the argument that pre-contract confidentiality under Section 34 of the Public Private Partnership Act prevents disclosure is misleading.

The section only covers pre-contract activities and clearly states that the provisions of the Right to Information Act 2009 shall prevail, which means the government was supposed to disclose details even at the pre-contract stage.

Moreover, once a contract is executed, it becomes a public document and there is no legal bar to publishing it.

Barua emphasised that the interim government, which has a limited mandate of a few months, has no authority to commit the nation to such long-term obligations that affect the economy and the people for decades.

He warned that rushing the

agreement within a very short timeframe, and on a holiday no less, signals a lack of due diligence and raises suspicions about potential irregularities or conflicts of interest.

Drawing on past experiences with mega-projects, he argued that secrecy often accompanies mismanagement or corruption.

He also called for immediate public disclosure of all contract documents, urging the authorities to upload the agreements online for independent review.

“Transparency is not only a legal requirement but a moral obligation.” Barua stressed that full thorough scrutiny would enable legal and policy experts to assess the agreements, protect national interest and ensure that future contracts follow the principles of accountability, fairness and the public good.

The proposed offshore port project is deeply flawed and poses a serious risk to national maritime infrastructure, said Md Anam Chowdhury, president of the Bangladesh Merchant Marine Officers' Association, at another event organised by Voice for Reform and BRAIN.

He emphasised that the country has historically failed to place qualified personnel in key technical positions, resulting in mismanagement and poorly executed projects.

Non-technical decision-makers should not be in charge of complex port operations and all such projects must be handled by trained professionals, he added.

The Chattogram Port is being managed profitably, said Shams Mahmud, managing director of Shasha Denims, a garment exporter. Therefore, the Mongla and Payra ports should have been handed over to foreign operators first, which could have created a ‘win-win’ situation for Bangladesh.

However, he expressed hope that the modern technologies the foreign companies bring to port operations will have a positive impact on the country.

### Wife claims

FROM PAGE 12

told her to file the case with the court after receiving the autopsy report.

When contacted, Iqbal Hossain, the duty officer who dealt with Mukta, said, “Since Moktar's death occurred in DB custody, outside our jurisdiction, I asked the victim's wife to speak to the OC first.”

“After speaking with the OC, she left the station. I don't know what was discussed between them,” he added.

Several attempts were made to contact Pallabi police OC Mafizur Rahman over the phone, but he did not answer the calls.

Moktar was arrested in a raid on Thursday. According to police, he was beaten by locals as he tried to flee.

He reportedly fell ill around 1:30am on Friday and was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where he was examined, given medication, and discharged before being brought back to the DB office.

Around 10:00am the same day, Moktar was found unconscious in his cell and was again taken to DMCH, where doctors pronounced him dead, police said.

However, the victim's family dismissed the claim that locals had beaten Moktar and alleged foul play. “My husband died due to torture in DB custody,” Mukta told this newspaper on Friday.

### 4 of a family killed

FROM PAGE 12

minor injuries, told reporters they were heading to Kantajew Temple in Kantanagar for the Rash Mela.

“All of a sudden, the bus hit our easy bike. I am helpless... I don't know what to do...” he said before breaking down in tears.

Obaidul Islam, senior station officer of Dinajpur Fire Service and Civil Defence, said they got the information at 2:22pm and went to the spot. Marjina, Sadia, and Sammi died on the spot while Tanjima succumbed to her injuries at the hospital.

The remaining four, including the easy bike rider Rubel, 25, are undergoing treatment at the hospital with severe injuries, he added.

Dashmile Highway Police Station Sub-Inspector Rejaul Karim said police seized the bus but its driver and helper managed to flee.

He said the process to file a case is underway.

## ‘The better he does

FROM PAGE 12

The meeting in the Oval Office, where Trump has sometimes embarrassed or chastised visiting heads of state, far exceeded Trump's prediction earlier on Friday that it would be “quite cordial.”

The men, two different generations of New Yorkers, announced nothing new on policy except what seemed to be the launch of an unexpected, politics-shifting professional friendship.

“What I really appreciate about the president is that the meeting that we had focused not on places of disagreement, which there are many, and also focused on the shared purpose that we have in serving New Yorkers,” Mamdani said.

Just 26 percent of Americans say Trump is doing a good job at managing the cost of living, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll. Meanwhile, Mamdani, promising a freeze on rents and free buses and childcare, was one of a slew of Democratic victors around the country in elections earlier this month. It was among the most deflating nights endured by Republicans this year, and Trump had not been expected to enjoy the reminder through a visit by one of the most prominent Democratic winners.

Yet the president, who found his fame as a New York real estate developer, brightened at Mamdani's call for more housing in the city

he will lead from January 1. Trump was cheered to hear a chunk of New Yorkers who voted for him in last year's presidential election had gone on to vote for Mamdani.

“When we spoke to those voters who voted for President Trump, we heard them speak of the cost of living,” Mamdani said.

Trump, who says he is paying increasing attention to affordability and inflation, said this made sense to him: “Some of his ideas are the same ideas I have,” Trump explained. “The better he does, the happier I am.”

As Mamdani surged in the polls to victory on November 4, Trump issued threats to strip federal funding from New York City. Mamdani has regularly criticized Trump's promise to ramp up federal immigration enforcement efforts in a city where four in 10 residents are foreign-born.

In the weeks before they met, Trump had labelled Mamdani a “radical left lunatic,” a communist and a “Jew hater.”

Mamdani has espoused Nordic-style democratic socialism, not communism. While a staunch critic of Israel, he was endorsed by prominent Jewish politicians, is bringing Jewish staff into his new administration, notably New York Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch, and has repeatedly condemned antisemitism.

## Deal reached

FROM PAGE 12

need funds to adapt to impacts that are already hitting, like rising sea levels and worsening heat waves, droughts, floods, and storms.

Avinash Persaud, Special Advisor to the President of the Inter-American Development Bank, a multilateral lender focused on Latin America and the Caribbean, said the accord's focus on finance was important as climate impacts mount.

“But I fear the world still fell short on more rapid-release grants for developing countries responding to loss and damage. That goal is as urgent as it is hard,” he said.

The impasse between the European Union and the Arab Group of nations over fossil fuels had pushed the talks past a Friday deadline, triggering all-night negotiations before a compromise could be reached.

Correa do Lago said on Saturday

morning that the presidency was issuing a side text on fossil fuels - as well as on protecting forests - keeping it out of the main accord because of the lack of consensus.

But he urged countries to keep discussing the issues.

“I know that most of you are tired, but as president of this conference, it is my duty to recognize some very important discussions that took place in Belem and that needs to continue during the Brazilian presidency, until the next COP, even if they are not reflected in this text we just approved,” he said.

Saturday's agreement also launches a process for climate bodies to review how to align international trade with climate action, according to the deal text, amid concerns that rising trade barriers are limiting the adoption of clean technology.





3 more die of dengue, 593 get hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least three dengue patients died while 593 others were hospitalised in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), two deaths were reported from Barishal division and one from Dhaka South City Corporation.

With the new deaths and cases, the total number of deaths rose to 356, while total cases rose to 89,486 this year.

Currently, 2,799 dengue patients are undergoing treatment at different hospitals across the country.

PRAYER  
TIMING

NOVEMBER 23

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	5-05	12-45	3-45	5-21	7-00
JAMAT	5-40	1-15	4-00	5-24	7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Coach shortage cripples services on 4 intercity trains

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

An acute coach shortage has emerged on four intercity trains operating between Dhaka and Lalmonirhat, Rangpur, Kurigram, and Burimari, forcing many regular travellers to make their journeys standing or in severely congested spaces due to a lack of adequate seating.

No additional carriages have been added to these trains to avoid schedule disruptions. As a result, delays in departure, prolonged halts along the route, and late arrivals have become routine, with passengers frequently facing disruptions ranging from one to five hours.

Railway officials and commuters say at least one more carriage on each of the four trains is now essential to handle the growing number of passengers.

According to the Lalmonirhat divisional railway office, the Lalmoni Express from Lalmonirhat, Rangpur Express from Rangpur, Kurigram Express from Kurigram, and Burimari Express from Burimari land port,



PHOTO: STAR

all run on the Dhaka route.

Each intercity train currently has 14 coaches, though the minimum requirement is 18 to 20.

The existing coaches provide a total of 653 seats, which is insufficient to accommodate the heavy passenger load.

At Rangpur Railway Station, trader Hafizur Rahman, 60, a resident of Rangpur, was waiting for a train. "There are not enough seats in the train. Due to the shortage of coaches,

many passengers have to travel standing. Some buy standing tickets while others somehow manage to board without tickets. If the number of coaches is increased, the railway will benefit and passengers will be able to travel more safely," he said.

College teacher Shahidul Haque, 50, from Lalmonirhat, who frequently travels to Dhaka, said, "The Lalmoni Express and Burimari Express often run behind schedule. Delays of one to five hours are common. An additional carriage could have reduced these sufferings significantly."

Lalmonirhat Railway Division's

Divisional Mechanical Engineer (Carriage and Wagon) Sheikh Asif Ahmad said a proposal has been sent to add four to five coaches to each of the four intercity trains operating on the Dhaka route, along with one additional carriage to maintain schedule discipline.

"But there is a coach shortage countrywide," he said.

He added that the process of importing new coaches is underway. "Even if new coaches are delayed, receiving old ones could temporarily resolve the issue. We are trying to secure that," he said.

SKOP declares blockade over leasing out port terminals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Chattogram unit of Sramik Karmachari Oilkya Parishad (SKOP) yesterday announced blockades on the approach roads to Chattogram port and protest programmes in all districts of the Chattogram division on Wednesday, protesting leasing out New Mooring Container, Laldia Char, and Pangaon port terminals – to foreign operators.

Kazi Sheikh Nurullah Bahar, general secretary of Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal, Chattogram division, made the announcement at the divisional trade union convention held at July Revolution Hall of the Chattogram Press Club.

The convention was organised by the SKOP Chattogram unit to press home a 13-point demand, including revising labour laws, ensuring trade union rights under a single law, and fixing fair wages.

Leaders and members of various workers' organisations attended. Bahar, chairing the convention, said two terminals had already been handed over to foreign operators, but details of the agreements were unknown.

"A lawsuit has been filed regarding the NCT handover. The court has ordered suspension of all contract activities until the hearing, but the order is not being followed," he alleged.

He vowed to force the government to cancel the decisions to hand over the terminals.

As per the protest schedule, blockades will be enforced from 10:00am to 1:00pm on Wednesday at the port approach points in Agrabad, Boropole and Mailer Matha. Protest rallies will also be held in all districts. Labour leaders expressed concern that leasing out Chattogram port to foreign companies would cripple the economy and leave 90 percent of port workers jobless.

Jahid Uddin Shahin, general secretary of Jatiya Sramik Jote, Chattogram district, made the same allegation.

Tapan Dutta, president of the Trade Union Centre, Chattogram district, said policy failures of the previous government caused immense suffering, while the new government's decisions were also not worker-friendly.



The participants at the convocation ceremony of Stamford University Bangladesh at International Convention City Bashundhara in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

IDP, Star

FROM PAGE 4

University; The Australian National University; The University of Adelaide; Flinders University; LA Trobe University; University of Lancashire; Macquarie University; University of Missouri-Kansas City; The University of Newcastle, Australia; University of New Haven; Nottingham Trent University; University of Portsmouth; The University of Queensland; SOAS University of London; Swinburne University of Technology Sarawak Campus; University of Technology Sydney; Thompson Rivers University; Victoria University; University of the West of England Bristol; Western Sydney University; and University of Wollongong.

Alongside well-recognised schools, global agencies such as Navitas, OnCampus, INTO University Partnerships, and Education Centre of Australia were also present at the expo.

515 headteacher posts vacant in Bagerhat

PARTHA CHAKRABORTTY, Bagerhat

A severe shortage of permanent headteachers is hampering academic activities in 1,162 government primary schools across Bagerhat, raising concerns over school management and learning outcomes for thousands of children.

According to the District Primary Education Office, 515 headteacher posts remain vacant. Presently, 198 teachers are carrying out these duties in an acting capacity.

District Primary Education Officer Nasrin Akter said, "This is a major challenge for us."

Promotions cannot be processed because a related case is still pending in a higher court. "Once the court delivers its verdict, we will immediately begin the process," she said, noting that the director general has already taken steps to expedite proceedings.

School authorities say the leadership void comes on top of shortages in

infrastructure, teachers, and teaching materials.

At Shibpur Palli Unnayan Government Primary School in Kachua upazila, the impact is stark. The school has only two classrooms, forcing teachers to hold lessons outdoors.

"We take extra classes for fifth graders in the open air because we don't have enough classrooms," said assistant teacher Anwara Khatun, who is serving as acting headteacher.

Staff shortages have further strained the school, with one assistant teacher on maternity leave and another set to retire on LPR in March.

Students, too, voiced their case. Fourth-grader Rafi ul Islam said, "We don't have enough classrooms, and our teachers are few. The field is also very small."

"The sooner the court gives its ruling, the better. Once promotions begin, we will finally be able to fill the 515 vacant posts," said an education official.



6 workers injured in boiler explosion

FROM PAGE 4

inquired, the management stated that while feeding coal into the boiler, some hot coal splashed onto a few workers, causing burns to six of them."

He added, "Although the coal splashed on their bodies, no fire broke out,

which was why they did not inform us. A detailed report will be available after investigation."

Bashundhara Cement Factory Senior Executive (Admin) Abdur Rahim said all six were working at the factory when the boiler exploded, causing

severe burns. They were immediately rushed to Dhaka for treatment.

Shaon Bin Rahman, resident surgeon at the burn institute, said, "Six patients were brought from a cement factory in Bandar with burn injuries."

Nahid suffered over 40 percent burns, Kamrul 26 percent, Taijul 12 percent, Torab 16 percent, Ferdous 10 percent, and Atikur 27 percent, he said. All six workers suffered damage to their airways, the doctor added.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Metropolitan Senior Special Judge Court, Dhaka

Present: Mr. Md. Sabbir Faiz  
(Metro Sessions Judge)  
Metropolitan Senior Special Judge, Dhaka

Order on Petition for Confiscation (arising out of  
Permission Petition-758/2025

Pallabi Police Station Case No. 19 dated 07.09.2025, Under Sections 4(2)/4(4) of the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012

ORDER No. 02. Dated: 9th October 2025

This order arises out of an application filed by the Additional Superintendent of Police. Financial Crime Unit, praying for confiscation of frozen bank accounts in connection with the above-mentioned case, which is under investigation for offences under Sections 4(2) and 4(4) of the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012.

Background:

That Pallabi Police Station Case No. 19 dated 07.09.2025 was registered under the Money Laundering Prevention Act. 2012 on allegations of concealment, transfer, and conversion of illicit funds obtained through predicate offences.

That, upon prayer from the investigating officer, the Learned Magistrate earlier passed an order to freeze the relevant bank accounts linked to the accused persons, pending investigation. That now, the Additional Superintendent of Police (Financial Crime Unit) has submitted a formal application praying that the said frozen accounts be confiscated in favour of the State, citing that:

The investigation has revealed sufficient material indicating that the funds in the bank accounts are proceeds of crime as defined under the Money Laundering Prevention Act 2012: Allowing the accused to retain such property would frustrate the object and purpose of the statute:

The action is necessary to preserve the interest of the State and public justice.

Findings:

On perusal of the application, case diary, supporting materials including bank transaction records, and the preliminary investigation report submitted by the Financial Crime Unit, it appears that:

A prima facie case exists indicating that the frozen-accounts contain funds suspected to be derived from criminal activities:

The funds in question fall under the definition of "property involved in money laundering" as per Section 2(15) of the Money Laundering Prevention Act. 2012;

Under Section 20(1) of the said Act. the Court has the authority to order attachment. seizure, or confiscation of such property during investigation, if deemed necessary for protecting the interests of justice:

The prayer is in accordance with law, and no legal bar has been found in passing such order at this stage.

Order:

Accordingly, the prayer of the Additional Superintendent of Police, Financial Crime Unit is hereby allowed.

The previously frozen bank accounts linked to the accused persons in Pallabi Police Station Case No. 19 dated 07.09.2025 shall remain under confiscation in favour of the State, subject to further orders of the trial court or any superior court.

Let a copy of this order be sent to the concerned banks and investigating officer for immediate compliance.

Inform all parties accordingly.

Pronounced in open Court on this the 9th day of October. 2025.

Directed & Corrected by me.

Sd/-

Md. Sabbir Faiz

Metro. Senior Special Judge, Dhaka

Sd/-

Metro. Senior Special Judge, Dhaka

Memo Number: ১৬৩২৪(১০)/২৫

Date: 21/10/25

GD-2526



# Strategic urban health action to unlock healthy, prosperous, and resilient societies

On World Cities Day, the World Health Organisation (WHO) called on national and city leaders to transform urban areas into engines of health, equity and sustainability.

More than 4.4 billion people lived in urban areas, a figure projected to rise to nearly 70% by 2050. In cities, health, inequality, environment and economy intersected in powerful ways, creating complex risks and opportunities.

The worst health outcomes were concentrated in slums and informal settlements, where 1.1 billion people endured unsafe housing, inadequate sanitation, food insecurity and rising exposure to floods and heat, a number expected to treble by 2050.

With the guide launched on World Cities Day, taking a strategic approach to urban health, WHO provided concrete ideas for a new era of urban health action. It responded to the demand for integrated solutions and offered the first comprehensive framework to help governments plan urban health strategically.

**“Taking a Strategic Approach to Urban Health”** outlines practical steps for governments to:

- understand the complexity of urban systems and how they shape health and equity;
- identify entry points for action, recognising opportunities to build urban health across policy and practice agendas in other sectors and issues;
- strengthen the means of implementation for urban health, including governance, financing, data, analytics, innovation, capacity-strengthening, partnerships and participation; and
- develop comprehensive urban health strategies at both national and city levels.

Alongside the Guide, WHO launched the first three modules of an Urban Health E-learning course, hosted by the WHO Academy, to strengthen capacities for collaborative work in urban contexts.

Source: World Health Organisation



PHOTO COURTESY: WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION

## WORLD PREMATURITY DAY 2025

# Give preterm babies a strong start for a hopeful future

Every year, World Prematurity Day (15 November) highlights the urgent need to care for babies born too soon. This year's theme echoes WHO's *Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures* campaign, reminding us that every child deserves a fair chance at life, starting from their very first moments.

Globally, 1 in 10 babies is preterm, with most preventable deaths occurring in low- and middle-income countries. Very preterm babies, especially those under 32 weeks, face life-threatening complications such as underdeveloped lungs, brains, and immune systems, as well as difficulty regulating temperature.

While almost all very preterm babies survive in high-income countries, survival in the poorest settings is rare.

### Key actions to protect preterm babies:

- *Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC)* – skin-to-skin contact prevents hypothermia, strengthens bonding, and improves survival.
- *Early and exclusive breastfeeding* – provides immunity, supports growth, and promotes development.
- *Respiratory support* – non-invasive ventilation, like CPAP, saves lives and reduces complications.
- *Infection prevention* – clean environments and timely access to antibiotics reduce risks.



- *Family-centred care* – keeping parents close, involving them in care decisions, and supporting emotional and practical needs improves outcomes.

### System-level interventions:

- Invest in neonatal units, trained staff, life-saving equipment, and dedicated spaces.
- Strengthen maternal health services to prevent preterm births and detect complications early.
- Provide equitable access to care so survival does not depend on geography or income.
- Support families with financial, emotional, and practical resources during hospitalisation.

Failing to provide these interventions not only loses lives but also loses futures filled with potential. By acting now, communities, health systems, and governments can ensure that every preterm baby has a strong start, survives, and thrives, turning fragile beginnings into hopeful futures.

Source: World Health Organisation



### A Quiet Battle with Cancer

For years, his life was all about the hustle. As a Businessman in Mymensingh, his days were filled with site visits, client meetings, and the noise of business. He used to live life in his own way without any restrictions. But since June 2022, the noise has faded, and life has changed for Shah Md. Fakhru Islam.

With a simple breakfast and tea, he starts his day. There is no rush to get to work anymore. "I don't go out unless I really have to," he says calmly. "Whatever I earned in my earlier days, I am surviving on that now. This is the new reality for a former businessman fighting Stage

4 Lung Cancer. It is a battle he is fighting not with panic, but with quiet faith.

### It all started in 2022

A supposedly routine checkup turned into a nightmare. The diagnosis was Lung Cancer. But it wasn't caught early—it was Stage 4. The cancer had already spread from his lungs to his brain and throat.

"When I heard Stage 4, I was terrified," Fakhru Islam admits. He didn't wait after knowing that. He immediately flew to Chennai, India, for treatment.

### Fighting the expenses and exhaustion

Fkahrul Islam realised that buying medicine abroad costs too much. He gets his prescriptions from Indian doctors but buys the medicine from

Bangladesh. This arrangement somewhat relieves his stress a little bit. Every 21 days, he makes the trip from Mymensingh to Dhaka for chemotherapy and immunotherapy.

"The immunotherapy helped a lot," he says. "After my first chemo, I lost all my hair. But once the immunotherapy started, the hair loss stopped." But looking fine and feeling fine are two different things. For three or four days after every treatment, the side effects hit hard. "I lose all taste in my mouth.

Inside, it feels like my mouth is full of sores. I get irritated easily," he shares.

### An unpredictable comeback

For a while, it felt like he was

winning. The treatment was working. His lungs and brain were almost cancer-free. In fact, doctors even stopped the chemotherapy for six months. But cancer is unpredictable. In July of this year, a new lump appeared in his throat. The cancer had come back.

### His biggest support

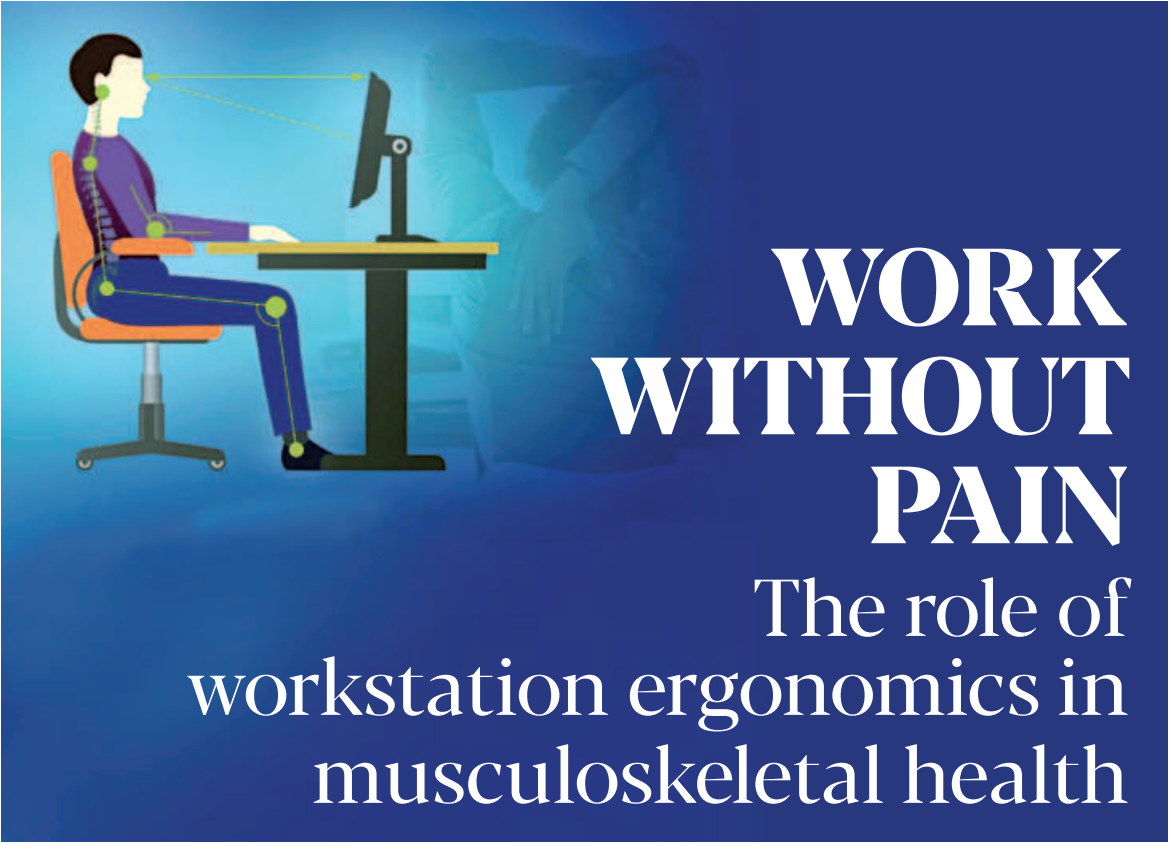
In this lonely fight, he is not entirely alone. He and his wife rely completely on each other. "My family totally supports me," he says. "But my wife... she is my biggest support. She handles everything, both physically and mentally." Along with my family members, healthcare professionals have always been there for me whenever I needed them.

### Fear replaced by acceptance

When asked how he handles the mental pressure of a terminal illness, his voice remains steady. The fear he felt in 2022 is gone. "I realised that since I was born, death is inevitable," he says. He follows the rules. He takes his medicine. He endures the pain of chemotherapy, long trips to Dhaka. He knows the reality of his condition and shares, "I am treating it. As long as I have time left, I will live. When it ends, I will go."

-Shah Md. Fakhru Islam  
Lung Cancer Survivor

BEACON®  
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### BIJOY DAS

Musculoskeletal health has become a growing concern in today's modern workplace, where most professionals spend long hours sitting at computers or doing the same thing over and over. Work-related health issues like back pain, neck stiffness, shoulder tension, and issues with the wrist or knee are now common. These conditions often develop gradually due to poor posture, improper workstation design, and lack of movement — all of which contribute to strain on the spine, joints, ligaments, and muscles.

### The science of safe work design:

Ergonomics is the science of designing the workplace to fit the worker — not forcing the worker to fit the workstation. A well-designed workstation keeps the body in a neutral position, reduces fatigue, and keeps any one part of the body from being put under too much stress. Key Principles of Workstation Ergonomics

1. *Chair and sitting posture* – Choose a chair with armrests, lumbar support, and a height that can be adjusted. Keep your feet flat on a footrest or the floor. The angles of your hips and knees should be between 90 and 100 degrees. Using lumbar support, the

natural curve of the lower back can be maintained. Stand or walk for two to three minutes every thirty minutes to break up long periods of sitting.

2. *Desk and monitor position* – The top of the monitor should be at or slightly below eye level. • The screen should be about an arm's length away. • Keep the keyboard and mouse close enough to avoid overreaching. • Wrists should remain straight, not bent upwards or downwards.
3. *Keyboard and mouse use* • Use an ergonomic keyboard and mouse designed to keep wrists in a neutral position. • Avoid resting wrists on hard surfaces; use a soft wrist pad if needed.

- Keep your elbows bent at a 90-degree angle and close to your body.

4. *Work habits and movement* • Every hour, take a few minutes to stretch and move around. Rotate tasks, if possible, to avoid repetitive strain. • Perform simple neck, shoulder, and back stretches during breaks. • To maintain healthy muscles and joints, drink plenty of water and exercise regularly.

5. *Lighting and environment* • Make sure the lighting is right so you don't strain your eyes or put

your head forward.

- Reduce glare on the monitor by adjusting its position or using filters.
- Maintain a comfortable room temperature to prevent stiffness.
- Keeping the joints and spine safe Because the spine is the body's central pillar, even minor stress can have long-term effects. • Maintaining a neutral spine posture, where the natural curves of the neck, thoracic, and lumbar regions are preserved, is essential. • Avoid slouching or leaning forward for long durations. • Knees should be bent, not the waist, when lifting. Use both hands and keep the load close to your body.

A healthy spine and joint system are essential for a productive and pain-free working life. Employees can avoid musculoskeletal injuries by following ergonomic guidelines, sitting in the right position, and moving throughout the day.

Organisations that prioritise ergonomic safety not only safeguard the health of their workforce but also enhance efficiency, morale, and overall job satisfaction.

The writer is the physical therapy consultant and head of the physiotherapy department at Ashulia Women & Children Hospital. Email: dr.bjoy@gmail.com

# From awareness to action: Making workplaces diabetes-smart

### ABEDA SULTANA

Diabetes continues to rise at an alarming rate. Globally, 7 out of 10 (412 million) adults living with diabetes are of working age. Three out of four people with diabetes report feeling anxious, depressed, or having other mental health issues due to their condition. Managing diabetes at work negatively affects the mental well-being of 4 in 10 employees with the condition.

People living with diabetes often face unfair treatment and barriers in the workplace, including harassment and bullying due to misunderstanding or stigma. The workplace has emerged as a critical battleground in the fight against this chronic disease. Long sitting hours, shift work, irregular meal patterns, and high job stress make it harder for patients to manage their condition.

Many employees are also denied essential breaks for snacks and rest. Employees with poorly controlled diabetes may experience fatigue, reduced concentration, frequent sick leave, and complications that affect productivity. They may be overlooked for career development or training opportunities, which limits their professional growth. Some feel uncomfortable monitoring their condition openly at work or are refused time off for necessary medical appointments. There is a lack of workplace policies to support people with diabetes.

A diabetes-friendly workplace is not a luxury; it is a necessity in today's world. Workplaces can become more supportive for employees with diabetes by introducing helpful policies, creating a non-judgemental environment, and offering understanding and care.

The International Diabetes Federation outlines ten strategies for workplaces to do more for diabetes care and prevention. This includes offering private spaces for diabetes management, access to healthy food, water, and necessary breaks, as well as promoting physical activity and mental well-being. Employers should allow flexible working arrangements and organise regular screenings for early detection. Having trained first aiders and emergency supplies ensures safety, while awareness materials help reduce stigma and increase understanding across the workforce. Overall, such efforts promote a supportive and healthy workplace, which can reduce absenteeism, improve job satisfaction, and boost overall productivity.

In addition, workplaces should implement anti-discrimination policies to protect employees with diabetes, provide education and training for managers and colleagues to reduce stigma and support mental well-being, ensure access to diabetes tools and technology, foster peer support networks, and monitor the effectiveness of workplace interventions to improve health outcomes and productivity.

By adopting these comprehensive measures, employers can create an environment where employees with diabetes feel supported, safe, and empowered to manage their condition effectively. Such proactive approaches not only enhance individual health and well-being but also strengthen overall workplace performance, engagement, and organisational resilience, benefiting both employees and employers alike.

The writer is a public health nutritionist. Email: abeda.mishu@gmail.com





After Bangladesh set a 509-run target for visiting Ireland on Day 4 of the second and final Test at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday, Taijul Islam trapped Ireland skipper and opener Andy Balbirnie in front in the sixth over -- making him his 247th Test victim, one more than Shakib.

### MOST WICKETS IN TESTS FOR BANGLADESH

Name	Matches	Wickets
Taijul Islam	57*	249
Shakib Al Hasan	71	246
Mehidy Hasan Miraz	56*	209
Mohammad Rafique	33	100
Mashrafe Bin Mortaza	36	78

“I would say that whoever was playing in their time was the best. Taijul is the best right now. Rafique bhai was the best in his time. Shakib is world-class...Taijul's importance is very high, especially when playing in Asia. Everyone views it that way.”

Bangladesh specialised batting coach  
Mohammad Ashraful

## HEAD SERVES England their own ‘Bazball’ medicine

AGENCIES

Makeshift opener Travis Head blazed an 83-ball 123 to propel Australia to an eight-wicket victory over England inside just two days in the Ashes opener at Perth Stadium. The frenetic contest, the shortest Ashes Test by overs since 1888, kept the crowd of nearly 50,000 enthralled.

England, having set Australia a target of 205 after being bowled out for 164 in their second innings, looked poised to defend the total. Scott Boland starred with four for 33, triggering a collapse that claimed nine wickets after tea.

“It’s got to be right up there. Wow. That was incredible to witness. That innings from Travis Head was out of this world. He played some outrageous shots and even when he mistimed a few, they still seemed to find the gap.”

Australia stand-in skipper Smith

“Little bit shell-shocked, it was pretty phenomenal from Head,” Stokes said. It’s pretty raw, pretty emotional, but that was some knock. We tried three or four different plans to get him, but when he’s going like a train he’s very hard to stop.”

England captain Ben Stokes

The tourists had earlier posted 172 in their first innings.

Head, stepping in for Usman Khawaja, who left with back trouble, greeted England with an

Travis Head smashed a 69-ball century, the third-fastest by an Australian, matching David Warner’s 69-ball ton in 2012, and behind Adam Gilchrist (57 balls, 2006) and Jack Gregory (early 1920s). The fastest century of all time is Brendon McCullum’s 54-ball masterpiece in Christchurch against Australia in 2016.

aggressive display, giving them a taste of their own ‘Bazball’ medicine in the third session. He smashed Brydon Carse for six over third man to bring up 50 and added four boundaries off Ben Stokes’ second over.

Marnus Labuschagne contributed a rapid 51 from 49 balls, while debutant Jake Weatherald managed 23 before falling to Carse. But Head stole the show, bringing up one of Australia’s fastest centuries with a daring upper-cut. His innings included 16 boundaries and four sixes, culminating when he lofted Carse to Ollie Pope at deep midwicket, leaving Labuschagne to complete the chase.

Stand-in captain Steve Smith, unbeaten on two, sealed the win with a single, completing a thrilling chase that highlighted both explosive batting and incisive bowling from Mitchell Starc, Boland, and debutant Brendan Doggett.



Wow, what a couple of days. It’s been unbelievable. We’ll celebrate, it’s an Ashes series, we’re 1-0 up, it’s a fantastic start.

Travis Head

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Failure to convert: A tedious routine

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh are in pole position to whitewash Ireland in the ongoing two-match Test series, which is hardly surprising when playing at home against a new Test side.

Having won the first match in Sylhet by an innings and 47 runs, Bangladesh have dominated the visitors in the second game in Mirpur as well, with Ireland needing 333 more runs to win and only four wickets in hand on the final day.

While the result seemed almost predetermined even before the series began, what would trouble the Tigers most is the number of missed opportunities by the batters.

Bangladesh held off declaring in the second innings of the ongoing Test because Mominul Haque was close to his 14th Test hundred -- which would have made him the holder of most hundreds in the format for Bangladesh.

But his innings ended on 87 with a soft dismissal, prompting skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto to declare



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

immediately after setting a 509-run target.

This was not the only instance of Mominul getting close to such milestones. He missed out on a hundred in the National Cricket League just before the Ireland series, was dismissed for 82 in the only innings in the first Test in Sylhet, and fell for a well-made 63 in the first innings of this Test -- making it three consecutive innings of falling just short of the three-figure mark.

It is not just Mominul. Several batters have failed to capitalise on good starts. Shadman Islam has missed out on two centuries in this series. Mahmudul Hasan Joy looked set for a double ton in Sylhet but fell for 171.

“He probably doesn’t worry much about the runs. However, my personal opinion is that when I used to talk to [Sachin] Tendulkar, he would also take a lot of time to score those last 10 runs,” Bangladesh specialised batting coach Mohammad Ashraful said about Mominul.

Ashraful also appeared displeased with the manner of Mominul’s dismissal -- a simple catch at silly mid-off -- in the second innings.

“What’s important is whether his process is correct or not. Is his process right? For example, he got out in the first innings; you can’t say anything about that. It was totally unlucky,” Ashraful added.

According to the former Bangladesh skipper, the mentality required to convert starts into bigger knocks must be developed in domestic cricket.

Ashraful believes that reminding players about the importance of building an innings will be a key part of his coaching role. Skipper Shanto has five fifties and eight hundreds in Tests -- a conversion rate of 61 percent after reaching fifty -- and Ashraful feels others need similar reminders.

“Like Shanto’s rate -- his conversion rate is 61 percent after a fifty. If you can just remind each player that your rate of scoring a hundred after 50 is 61 percent, meaning the hard work you do to score 30 to 50 makes it easier afterwards... it will be possible to perform,” he said.

Joy, Mushfiqur Rahim, and Shanto all got centuries in this series, but there could have been more. In terms of conversion, the Ireland Tests serve as a harsh lesson to improve the mental side of batting.



## WOMEN ENSURE MAIDEN WORLD CUP MEDAL

Bangladesh players break out in unbridled joy after beating Thailand by 40-31 points to book a place in the semifinals and confirm a maiden medal in the Women’s Kabaddi World Cup at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. With three wins from four matches, Bangladesh emerged second in Pool A and will meet Pool B winners Chinese Taipei in the second semifinal today. Defending champions India, meanwhile, will square off against Iran in the first semifinal.

PHOTO: BKF

## ASIA CUP RISING STARS Bangladesh A take on Pakistan Shaheens in final

SPORTS REPORTER

Akbar Ali led Bangladesh A will take on Pakistan Shaheens in the final of the Asia Cup Rising Stars tournament at West End Park International Cricket Stadium in Doha today. The match would get underway at 8:30 pm Bangladesh Time.

U-19 World Cup winning captain Akbar Ali is yet to find a way through to the national team even as many of his peers have made the step up. Yet, under his captaincy, the A side are now hoping for silverware, especially after beating tournament favourites India in a thrilling game on Friday.

The task, however, is not expected to be easy as Shaheens have come to the final unbeaten. Batter Maaz Sadaqat has been in fine form with 235 runs, batting at a strike rate of over 180 this tournament. Sufiyan Muqem, the left-arm wrist-spinner, has claimed seven wickets and will be vital to Shaheens’ bid to win the tournament.

Ripon Mondol, the highest wicket-taker in the tournament, held his nerve in a crucial Super Over performance against India, and Bangladesh would be hoping he leads the charge with the ball.

Habibur Rahman Sohan played an important hand in the semis against India, alongside SM Meherob who hit an 18 ball 48. Along with Jishan Alam and others, the onus will be on the batters to continue their good run of form if Bangladesh A are to achieve something significant on Sunday.

This feeling is beyond words, really. Playing on home soil and being able to secure a medal for the country -- what could be more joyful than this?

Bangladesh player  
Smriti Akter

Previously, we had no medals in the World Cup; today we have one -- this is a major achievement. But the work is far from over. My target now is the Asian Games. Our training camp will continue until the 2026 Asian Games.

BKF general secretary  
SM Nawaz Shohag

### SHORT CORNER

AFC U-17 ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS

#### Bangladesh make flying start

Bangladesh made a commanding start to their AFC U-17 Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers campaign with a resounding 5-0 victory over Timor-Leste in their opening Group A match in China on Saturday. Bangladesh will play their second match against Brunei on Monday.



#### Soumya hits career-best 186

Khulna Division opener Soumya Sarkar smashed a career-best 186 to lift his side to 328-6 against Mymensingh Division on Day 1 of the fifth round of NCL. In the same match, all-rounder Shuvagata Hom, who trapped Soumya lbw -- reached 300 wickets, becoming only the second Bangladeshi to achieve the double of 300 first-class scalps and 6,000 runs. Meanwhile in Cox’s Bazar, Dhaka Division’s Marshall Ayub became the fourth Bangladeshi to enter the 10,000-run club in first-class cricket, reaching the milestone en route to his 28th century.

\*\*Read The Daily Star website for full stories.



Dinajpur district team footballers celebrate their thrilling 3-2 victory over Sirajganj district team in following an extra-time winner from Yeasin Ali in the final of the National Football Championship at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday. Sagor Mohanta and Prodip Soren had given Dinajpur a 2-0 by the hour-mark but Uzzal Hossen and Hassan Ali scored to force the match into extra time where Yeasin sealed the deal for Dinajpur. Yeasin was adjudged the player of the final while Sirajganj goalkeeper Abul Kashem was named best goalkeeper of the tournament.

PHOTO: BFF





## MoUs inked with Bhutan on internet, healthcare

### Bhutanese PM shows interest in FTA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and Bhutan yesterday signed two memoranda of understanding on health cooperation and internet connectivity and also explored plans to formally begin talks on a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA).

Thimphu aims to sign the FTA “as quickly as possible” and hopes that Bhutan will become the first country to conclude a free trade deal with Bangladesh, said the visiting Bhutanese Prime Minister, Tshering Tobgay, in his meeting with Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus.

Tobgay arrived yesterday morning on a two-day state visit.

Both sides discussed a plan to formally launch discussions on an FTA. Bangladesh and Bhutan previously concluded a preferential

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Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus welcomes visiting Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay at the Chief Adviser's Office in the capital's Tejgaon area yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: PID

## ‘Why rush to hand over terminals to foreign operators?’

### Asks Anu Muhammad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent economist and activist Anu Muhammad yesterday questioned why the interim government handed over two terminals to two foreign operators with just a few months left of its tenure.

According to its own announcement, the interim government will not remain in power for more than two to three months, he said at an event organised by Gonotantrik Odhikar Committee.

“Why would such a government make a 40-50-year agreement that will affect the entire economy and the country, and which contains many causes for concern? Why was the signing of that agreement rushed through, with secrecy and a lack of transparency? How do they have the authority to make such an agreement?”

Last week, the interim government signed two agreements, assigning Denmark's APM Terminals to build and operate a terminal at Laldia Char in Chattogram, and Switzerland based logistics firm Medlog SA to manage the Pangaon terminal near Dhaka.

However, the government has not disclosed the key details of the agreements.

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## ‘The better he does, the happier I am’

### Says Trump as he lavishes praise on Mamdani at warm White House meeting



REUTERS, Washington

After months of trading insults, US President Donald Trump and incoming New York City mayor Zohran Mamdani smiled at each other, swapped compliments and pledged to collaborate on tackling crime and affordability in the nation's biggest city at an unexpectedly friendly meeting at the White House on Friday.

The political opposites — a Republican billionaire and a young democratic socialist — have clashed over everything from immigration to economic policy. But it was clear the two forged a rapport in their first encounter.

Mamdani, a 34-year-old state lawmaker, stood by Trump's desk as the 79-year-old president smiled up at him and patted him warmly on the arm, having only recently falsely caricatured Mamdani as an antisemitic communist, among other jibes.

“We agree on a lot more than I would have thought,” Trump said after letting journalists and cameras into the Oval Office at the end of a private meeting with the mayor-elect. “We have one thing in common: We want this city of ours that we love to do very well.”

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## Suspect dies in hospital while in DB custody

### Family alleges torture

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A suspect detained in a murder case died in the custody of the Detective Branch of Police while undergoing treatment at Sirajganj General Hospital on Friday, a day after his arrest.

Md Shahadat Hossain, 45, an auto-rickshaw driver from Kalia Haripur, died around 3:30pm, police said.

His family, however, accused DB officials of torturing him to death in custody for failing to pay a bribe.

Shahadat's brother Jahurul Islam said, “A DB officer asked me to give Tk 5 lakh if I wanted my brother released... My brother died as he was mercilessly tortured in police custody.”

Police said Shahadat was detained on Thursday from Ullapara upazila as a suspect in the murder of auto-rickshaw driver Aminul.

Contacted by The Daily Star, Md Mahabubur Rahman, additional superintendent of police

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## Deal reached without fossil fuel plan

### Proposes tripling climate finance for developing nations by 2035

REUTERS, Belem

World governments yesterday agreed to a compromise climate deal at the COP30 conference in Brazil that would boost finance for poor nations coping with global warming but omit any mention of the fossil fuels driving it.

In securing the accord, countries attempted to demonstrate global unity in addressing climate change impacts even after the world's biggest historic emitter, the United States, declined to send an official delegation.

But the agreement, which landed in overtime after two weeks of contentious negotiations in the Amazon city of Belem, also exposed rifts between wealthy and developing nations, as well as between those governments with opposing views on oil, gas and coal. After gaveling the deal through, COP30 President Andre Correa do Lago acknowledged the talks had been tough.

“We know some of you had greater ambitions for some of the issues at hand,” he said.

The European Union had been the main holdout for language on a transition away from fossil fuels, but ultimately agreed to drop it after a coalition of countries including top oil exporter Saudi Arabia said it was off-limits.

“We should support (the deal) because at least it is going in the right direction,” the European Union's climate commissioner, Wopke Hoekstra, told

reporters before the deal was gavelled through.

Some countries had harsher words. “A climate decision that cannot even say fossil fuels is not neutrality, it is complicity. And what is happening here transcends incompetence,” said Panama's climate negotiator Juan Carlos Monterrey.

The deal launches a voluntary initiative to speed up climate action to help nations



meet their existing pledges to reduce emissions, and calls for rich nations to at least triple the amount of money they provide to help developing countries adapt to a warming world by 2035.

Scientists have said existing national commitments to cut emissions have cut projected warming significantly, but are not enough to keep world temperatures from breaching 1.5C above industrial levels, a threshold that could unleash the worst impacts of climate change.

Developing countries have argued in the meantime that they urgently

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## 4 of a family killed in bus-easy bike collision

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Four members of a family were killed and several others injured after a bus collided head-on with an easy bike in Dinajpur's Sadar upazila yesterday afternoon.

The deceased are Marjina Begum, 50, of Khanpur Koitur village in Sadar upazila; her daughter-in-law Tanjima Begum, 35; and her granddaughters Sadia, 12, and Sammi, 7, children of Abdus Salam and Marjina's daughter Yasmin Begum of Chiribandar upazila, said police. All of them were passengers in the auto-rickshaw.

Dinajpur's Kotwali Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Nuruzzaman said the accident took place around 2:00pm in front of the Dinajpur Wheat and Maize Research Institute when a Dinajpur-bound bus coming from Panchagarh collided head-on with the easy bike on the Dinajpur-Dashmile road in Nashipur village.

Three people died on the spot and five others were injured, he said.

On information, firefighters went to the spot, recovered the bodies, and took the injured to Dinajpur Medical College Hospital, where another victim succumbed to her injuries.

Police said the children had come to visit their grandparents' house.

Mokbul Hossain, 79, father-in-law of Marjina, who survived with

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## DEATH IN DB CUSTODY

### Wife claims police refused to register case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The family of Moktar Hossain, who died Friday while in the custody of the Detective Branch (DB), alleged yesterday that Pallabi police refused to register a case over his death and advised them to file it with the court.

Moktar, 40, was arrested in connection with the killing of Jubo Dal leader Golam Kibria, who was shot dead inside a shop in Pallabi on November 17.

“Since Moktar had been arrested in the Pallabi area, we went to the local police station shortly after midnight on Saturday to file a case over his death,” said the victim's wife, Mukta Sikder.

However, after learning that Mukta's husband had died in DB custody, the duty officer referred her to Officer-in-Charge Mafizur Rahman.

“The OC told me that the matter was outside their jurisdiction and the case could not be filed with the station,” Mukta said.

The duty officer then allegedly

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Bangladesh's left-arm spinner Taijul Islam celebrates one of his three wickets on Day 4 of their second and final Test against Ireland at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Taijul became the leading wicket-taker for Bangladesh in the format, surpassing Shakib Al Hasan, as he helped the Tigers inch closer to victory. Ireland ended the day at 176 for six in 54 overs, needing 333 more runs to win on the final day.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



## Debate over terminal operations

After handing over operations of two terminals in Chattogram and Dhaka to foreign companies, the government is now preparing to award the largest terminal at Chattogram port to an overseas operator.

The move has intensified an already heated debate, sparking protests.

Opponents cite national interests in their criticism, while the government argues it is essential to boost efficiency and support exports. As the debate continues, The Daily Star has prepared special coverage on the issue.

STORY ON B3