

"Yesterday, this country gave the world a lesson in democracy... you have someone imprisoned for an attempted coup."

Brazilian President Lula da Silva on Bolsonaro's jailing

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PURBACHAL PLOT SCAM Hasina gets 21yrs in 3 graft cases

Court also jails Joy and Putul for
five years in one case each



EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

A special court yesterday convicted deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her two children on corruption charges, handing them different jail terms in three cases filed over plots in

HASINA'S CONVICTION GROUNDS

- Abused authority to secure 6 Purbachal plots for herself, family
- Facilitated illegal allotment of another 50 kathas of Rajuk land
- Violated regulations and concentrated state resources in one family

Dhaka's Purbachal.

Hasina was sentenced to 21 years' rigorous imprisonment -- seven years in each of the three cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission this year. Her son, Sajeeb Wazed Joy, and daughter, Saima Wazed Putul, were co-accused in separate cases -- one each -- and were given five years' imprisonment.

The court found Hasina, who is now in India, guilty of illegally securing plots

courtroom while delivering the verdicts in the absence of the three accused.

He began delivering the verdicts at 11:23am amid heightened security in the court area.

Hasina's sentences came 10 days after the International Crimes Tribunal 1 handed her a death sentence for crimes against humanity committed during last year's July uprising.

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Senior BNP leaders said the reshuffle, carried out even before the election schedule was announced, is unusual

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

BNP has questioned the transparency, timing, and motives behind the government's recent reshuffles of field-level officers, including superintendents of police, deputy commissioners, and upazila nirbahi officers, ahead of the national election.

BNP leaders said the reshuffle, carried out even before the election schedule was announced, is unusual

and demanded explanations from the government.

On Wednesday, the government appointed or transferred SPs to all 64 districts through what it described as a "manual lottery". It also appointed new UNOs to 166 upazilas and recently posted 50 new DCs.

BNP leaders allege the lottery was "for show", claiming officers with "special

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RESHUFFLE IN POLICE, ADMIN BNP questions the govt's intention

'Officials loyal to certain party given priority'

5 quakes in a
week worry
Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five earthquakes in a week, all originating in Narsingdi, a district near Dhaka, have rattled residents of the capital and surrounding areas.

On Friday, a 5.7-magnitude quake jolted Dhaka and parts of Bangladesh, killing 10 people. Since then, four tremors have been felt in the region.

The latest struck Narsingdi and nearby areas yesterday afternoon.

"We have never seen anything like this since we began monitoring earthquakes in 1954. Though most of the quakes were minor, we have never recorded five earthquakes originating

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Workers renovating Dhaka University's Haji Muhammad Mohsin Hall, one of the old and vulnerable halls that underwent a post-earthquake inspection, yesterday. An engineering team led by Buet Professor Ishfaq Ahmed began inspecting risky DU halls on Sunday. Other such halls are also expected to undergo renovation.

ACC to have five
commissioners,
up from three
Govt okays 4 ordinances

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Advisory Council yesterday approved the final draft of the Anti-Corruption Commission Ordinance 2025 that aims to strengthen and enhance the commission's effectiveness in combating corruption and make it "a more effective organisation".

According to the new draft law, the ACC will publish its work report online every six months, while the ACC officers directly involved in anti-corruption investigations must submit their asset statements to their authorities.

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TOMORROW

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Death toll in HK fire rises to 83

REUTERS, Hong Kong

Hong Kong firefighters yesterday brought under control a huge blaze in an apartment complex that killed at least 83 and left nearly 300 missing, while police said its cause could have been a "grossly negligent" construction firm using unsafe materials.

Rescuers battled intense heat and thick smoke for more than a day after the blaze erupted as they fought to reach residents feared trapped on the upper floors of the Wang Fuk Court housing complex in the northern district of Tai Po.

A firefighter was among the dead, while dozens in hospital were in critical condition, authorities said. About 279 people have yet to be traced.

The eight blocks of the tightly packed complex have 2,000 apartments home to more than 4,600 people in the financial hub struggling to overcome chronic shortages of affordable housing.

Yesterday, police officers searched the building maintenance company responsible for the housing estate, seizing documents that mentioned it, media said. The company did not immediately respond to requests for comment.



Rescuers wade through floodwaters with a rope to evacuate residents trapped in their homes in Padang, West Sumatra province, Indonesia, yesterday. The nationwide flood death toll has risen to 61.

PHOTO: AFP

Brazil approves world's first single-dose dengue vaccine

AFP, Rio De Janeiro

Brazilian authorities on Wednesday approved the world's first single-dose dengue vaccine, which they hailed as a "historic" achievement as cases of the mosquito-borne disease soar globally due to rising temperatures.

Dengue, known for intense flu-like symptoms, crushing fatigue and body aches, reached record global levels in 2024 and researchers have attributed its spread to climate change.

Brazil's health regulatory agency ANVISA authorised the use of Butantan-DV, developed by the Butantan Institute in São Paulo, for people aged 12 to 59.

Currently, the only dengue vaccine available worldwide is TAK-003, which requires two doses administered three months apart, according to the WHO.

5 quakes in a week worry Dhaka

FROM PAGE 1

near Dhaka within such a short span of time," said Rubayet Kabir, in-charge of the Earthquake Monitoring Centre at the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD).

He said yesterday's 3.6-magnitude tremor occurred at 4:15pm. Its epicentre was in Ghorashal, Narshingdi, about 28km northeast of the BMD Seismic Centre in Dhaka's Agargaon.

Earlier yesterday morning, people in Sylhet also felt a jolt, which Kabir said originated in Manipur, around 300km outside Bangladesh territory.

On November 22, a light quake measuring 4.3 on the Richter scale was felt seven and a half hours after a 3.3-magnitude tremor recorded that afternoon. A third tremor, measuring 3.7 and centred in Palash upazila of Narshingdi, followed at 6:06pm, according to a Met office bulletin.

"We now think all these are aftershocks of the first earthquake," Kabir said, adding that such sequences are not unusual and that other countries experiencing major quakes have also recorded similar aftershocks.

Asked about the situation, Prof Dr Badruddoza Mia, chairman of the geology department at Dhaka University, said, "It seems these are aftershocks. So people need not panic. But they should take precautions."

However, some experts note that Dhaka lies close to the Indo-Burma subduction zone, where the Indian plate dives beneath the Burma plate along Bangladesh's eastern margin. For nearly two decades, experts have warned that living near such a zone means sitting atop a seismic time bomb.

The real concern is whether the energy accumulating in a subduction zone can trigger a major quake," said Prof Akhter Humayun, a former Dhaka University faculty member who has studied earthquakes for 40 years.

After the three consecutive quakes on November 22, Dhaka University authorities decided to close the university for two weeks to assess tremor risks and carry out necessary renovations of residential halls.

The government has also decided to review safety in other vulnerable structures in Dhaka. The Chief Adviser's Office has formed a task force and directed it to submit recommendations.

On November 24, Rajuk Chairman Riazul Islam said approximately 300 buildings – both large and small – in Dhaka have been identified as vulnerable following the recent quakes.

"Both Rajuk and building owners share responsibility for constructions that violate rules and approved designs. However, the main responsibility lies with the building owners," he added.

Hasina gets 21 yrs in 3 graft cases

FROM PAGE 1

In addition to yesterday's jail terms, the Awami League chief was also fined Tk 3 lakh in three cases, in default of which she will have to serve an additional 18 months in jail.

The court also fined Joy and Putul Tk 1 lakh each in their respective cases.

The trials of the three cases concluded after 13 hearings, according to the prosecution.

There are 20 other accused in the cases, including a former minister, two former secretaries, and the former Rajuk chairman and officials. Nineteen of them were sentenced to jail terms ranging from one to 18 years, while one was acquitted.

The ACC lodged six separate cases between January 12 and 14 with its Dhaka Integrated District Office-1 on charges of irregularities in the allocation of plots under the Purbachal New Town project.

The anti-graft body alleged that Hasina, in collusion with senior Rajuk officials, unlawfully secured six plots – each measuring 10 kathas – in the diplomatic zone of Sector 27 of the project for herself, Joy, Putul, her sister Sheikh Rehana, nephew Radwan Mujib Siddiqi Bobby, and niece Azmina Siddiqi, despite their ineligibility under existing regulations.

"The allotments were processed and approved in a manner inconsistent with lawful administrative practices, thereby conferring undue benefits upon her relatives," said the judgment.

The conduct of a premier, who used her long-held political authority to obtain 60 kathas of Rajuk land for herself, her son, daughter, sister, and her sister's children, demonstrates a persistent corrupt mindset rooted in entitlement, unchecked power, and a greedy eye for public property."

In the verdicts, Judge Mamun also said that despite serving four terms as a prime minister, she disregarded the allotment rules meant to ensure fairness and prevent the concentration of state resources within one family.

He added that she treated public land as if it were her private asset, exploiting state resources and manipulating official procedures to benefit herself and her close relatives.

"Such conduct reflects a deliberate abuse of public office and reveals a

belief that high political power places one above the law. These actions erode public trust and undermine the principles of integrity and accountability,"

Accordingly, the judge said, exemplary punishment is warranted, and justice will be served by imposing seven years' imprisonment on Hasina, the maximum penalty under section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947.

After the verdict, Sajeeb Wazed Joy, on his verified Facebook page, wrote, "My family and I each purchased 1/6 of an acre of land, in an undeveloped area on the outskirts of Dhaka, for 30 lakh Taka each. We paid for it with our own money. None of us has ever purchased property in Bangladesh before. The only property we have is inherited."

"... We received no communications, were not allowed to hire lawyers and there was absolutely no due process. The aim of this verdict was to prevent any of us from running for elections."

Hasina was ousted on August 5 last year in the face of student-led mass uprising. Currently, she is accused in over 550 cases filed with different police stations and courts across the country.

OTHER CONVICTS

The court sentenced former housing and public works state minister Sharif Ahmed and former secretaries Shahid Ullah Khandaker and Kazi Washi Uddin to 18 years' rigorous imprisonment and fined Tk 3 lakh each in three cases.

The ministry's former senior assistant secretary Purabi Goldar was sentenced to three years' simple imprisonment and fined Tk 20,000 in the same cases.

Rajuk's former chairman Anisur Rahman Miah was handed down 15 years in jail and a fine of Tk 1.5 lakh, while its former members Mohammad Nasir Uddin and Shamsuddin Ahmed Chowdhury were each given a nine years' imprisonment and a fine of Tk 60,000. Former member Mohammad Khurshid Alami was sentenced to three years in jail. All of them were convicted in all three cases.

Prime Minister's Office's former secretary Mohammad Salahuddin was handed a jail sentence of 12 years and a fine of Tk 2 lakh, while Rajuk's former members Tanmoy Das and Nurul Islam were handed down six years in jail and

a fine of Tk 40,000 each in two cases. Nayeb Ali Sharif, a former deputy director of Rajuk, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment and fined Tk 10,000 in two cases.

Rajuk's former members Shafiul Haque and Kabir Al Asad, and its former director Sheikh Shahinul Islam and incumbent Kamrul Islam were sentenced to three years in jail and a fine of Tk 20,000 each in one case. Its former deputy directors Hafizur Rahman and Habibur Rahman Sobuj, and former assistant director Mazharul Islam were sentenced to one year imprisonment and a fine of Tk 5,000 each in one case.

The court acquitted the housing and public works ministry's former administrative officer Saiful Islam Sarkar of the three cases as the prosecution failed to prove the charges against him.

During the verdict, only former Rajuk member Khurshid was present in the courtroom.

Speaking to reporters on the court premises, ACC Public Prosecutor Khan Md Moinul Hasan Lipon said the commission was not satisfied with the verdicts.

"After talking to the ACC, further steps will be taken challenging the verdicts," he told The Daily Star.

The Special Judge's Court-4 of Dhaka is scheduled to announce the verdict in a separate corruption case, filed against 17 people including Hasina, her sister Rehana and niece Tulip Siddiqi, on December 1.

The trial of two other graft cases filed against 21 people, including Hasina, her nieces Azmina and Tulip, and nephew Radwan, is now pending at the same court, said the prosecution.

According to ACC officials, Tulip, who stands accused in the three cases, used her power as a British MP to get plots for Rehana, Bobby and Azmina.

On March 25, the ACC filed six charge sheets with the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court in Dhaka, in which Hasina was named as a common accused in all six cases, including the three in which the verdict was announced yesterday.

On July 31, charges were framed against 29 people, including Hasina, Rehana, Joy, Putul, Bobby, Tulip and Azmina, in their respective cases.

The amendment strengthens the NHRC's role in preventing torture and inhuman treatment.

The NHRC will serve as the National Preventive Mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and this will allow the commission to conduct independent inspections of detention centres and other facilities.

The ordinance also gives the NHRC authority to monitor detention places and ensure human rights standards are maintained, Shafiqul said, adding that the commission will receive the financial and institutional support it needs to perform its duties.

On the Rohingya crisis, Shafiqul said the issue had lost global attention during the previous government.

Deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina focused more on promoting her image as the Mother of Humanity instead of addressing the real causes of the crisis.

The current administration has brought the issue back into international discussions through active diplomacy and engagement.

In response to a question, Shafiqul said Yunus had earlier expressed hope that Rohingyas might return home around Eid. However, diplomatic efforts take time and results may not appear immediately.

He also confirmed that the meeting did not include any discussion about elections or any advisers planning to take part in future polls.

LIFE-TERM FOR HASINA, KAMAL ICT prosecution to seek death penalty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution is preparing to appeal to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court seeking to upgrade the International Crimes Tribunal's life sentences for deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal to death in a crimes against humanity case linked to the July uprising.

On November 17, the ICT-1 sentenced the two to death on one charge and to imprisonment until natural death on another.

"We have been reviewing the judgement and primarily decided to seek enhancement of the life terms to death penalty," Prosecutor Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim told reporters yesterday.

Meanwhile, the ICT-2 yesterday heard a review petition filed by Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal leader Hasanul Haq Inu challenging the charge-framing order against him without any defence lawyer present.

During the hearing, Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam requested the court to dismiss the petition.

Contacted, Inu's lawyer Md Munsurul Hoque Chowdhury told The Daily Star that such matters are usually heard on scheduled dates and that neither he nor his juniors were informed of the early hearing.

Tajul later told reporters that the application not only questioned the legality of the July uprising

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Trump tells Japan PM not to aggravate China dispute: sources

REUTERS, Tokyo

US President Donald Trump asked Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi not to further escalate a dispute with China during talks this week, sources with knowledge of the matter said, as he tries to preserve a fragile trade war truce with Beijing.

Takaichi touched off the biggest diplomatic dispute with Beijing in years when she told parliament this month that a hypothetical Chinese attack on Taiwan that threatened Japan could justify a military response.

Her remark enraged Beijing, prompting it to warn its citizens against travel to its East Asian neighbour.

In Tuesday's telephone call with Takaichi, Trump said he did not want to see further escalation, said the two Japanese government sources, who sought anonymity as the matter is a sensitive one.

Trump made no specific demands of Takaichi, however, one of the sources said, suggesting that he did not echo Beijing's call for a retraction. Japan has said her remarks reflect longstanding government policy.

At a regular press briefing on Thursday, its Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kiuchi declined to comment on the details of the "diplomatic exchange".

That telephone conversation came after Trump spoke to Chinese President Xi Jinping, who told the US leader Taiwan's return to China was central to Beijing's vision for the world order, the official Xinhua news agency said.

Democratically governed Taiwan rejects Beijing's sovereignty claim.

Trump, who plans to travel to

Beijing in April, has not commented publicly on whether the talks featured Taiwan, saying instead that the world's two biggest economies have "extremely strong" ties and are close to finalising a broad trade deal.

"The United States' relationship with China is very good, and that's also very good for Japan, who is our dear and close ally," Trump said in a statement issued by the White House in response to questions from Reuters.

"We signed wonderful trade deals with Japan, China, South Korea, and many other nations, and the world is at peace. Let's keep it that way!"

In Tokyo, some officials have long worried that Trump may be prepared to soften support for Taiwan in pursuit of a trade accord with China, a move they fear will embolden Beijing and spark conflict in an increasingly militarised East Asia.

"For Trump, what matters most is US-China relations," said Kazuhiro Maejima, a professor of US politics at Sophia University. "Japan has always been treated as a tool or a card to manage that relationship."

Trump's public silence on Japan's escalating dispute with China has further frayed nerves in Tokyo.

Washington's envoy to Tokyo has said the United States supports Japan in the face of China's "coercion", but two senior ruling party lawmakers told Reuters they had hoped for more full-throated support from their top security ally.

Japan hosts the largest overseas concentration of US military, including an aircraft carrier strike group and a US Marine amphibious force that hem in China's military ambitions.

BNP questions govt intention

FROM PAGE 1

"loyalty" had already been chosen during earlier meetings with the chief adviser, BNP delegations stressed that officials responsible for election duties must remain neutral.

Changing officers who directly handle poll responsibilities just before the schedule is announced is "not only unusual but has created new questions" about the election environment, they said. Another Standing Committee member

cautioned that politically motivated appointments could make the administration biased "even before voting begins".

Three Standing Committee members also said officers with questionable past actions or political leanings have been posted in many districts, further deepening doubts about election time neutrality.

BNP believes the government is reorganising field administration in favour of a party as part of that party's election preparations.

They added that election security, administration, polling centre management, and enforcement of the code of conduct all depend on SPs, DCs, and UNOs. "If questionable appointments are made, political controversy over the election results may increase," said a senior BNP leader.

Two Standing Committee members demanded that the government clearly explain these transfers and appointments. They said the government must publish the reasons, standards, and procedures behind the reshuffle to ensure genuine transparency. Otherwise, public distrust in the Election Commission will grow.

"We will raise this issue at our party meeting to take an initiative on this matter," said a Standing Committee member.



Seven more die of dengue, 567 get hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least seven dengue patients died while 567 others were hospitalised in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, among the deaths, three were reported from Dhaka South City Corporation area, two from Mymensingh division and one each from Chattogram division and Dhaka North City Corporation.

With the new deaths and cases, the total number of dengue-related deaths this year rose to 377, while total cases rose to 92,785.

Currently, 2,189 dengue patients are undergoing treatment at different hospitals across the country.

ACC probing corruption allegations against DNCC administrator

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission has launched a preliminary inquiry into allegations of abuse of power, irregularities, corruption, and bribery against Dhaka North City Corporation Administrator Mohammad Azaz.

The probe officially began yesterday, according to a letter signed by ACC Director Ishita Rony, confirming that the agency has authorised the initial investigation.

A senior ACC official, seeking anonymity, also confirmed the development to The Daily Star.

ACC sources said the commission decided to look into the allegations after receiving multiple complaints.

Azaz was appointed administrator of DNCC by the interim government on February 12 this year for a one-year term.

Meanwhile, Local Government Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuiyan said the government would take action if the ACC finds evidence of wrongdoing.

He was speaking to reporters at the Secretariat.

Azaz told The Daily Star, "I have not received any official letter regarding the investigation yet. However, I welcome it. We will extend full cooperation during the investigation."

Proper, timely nutrition key to healthier pregnancies

Prof Keith P West tells icddr'b seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Early nutritional support may play a decisive role in improving pregnancy outcomes in settings where micronutrient deficiencies remain widespread, said Prof Keith P West of Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health of USA, yesterday.

He emphasised that improving women's nutrition before conception is essential for healthier pregnancies and stronger infant outcomes.

Prof West was speaking at a seminar at icddr'b Mohakhali office, marking the institution's 65th establishment anniversary. The seminar titled "A Half-Century's Journey of Nutritional Pursuit across Southern Asia" reflects on decades of scientific discovery and public health

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Pedestrians use this footbridge in the capital's Shahbagh area unaware of the dangerous hole on its walkway. Although some people have tried to cover or block it, the gap still poses a serious risk to anyone who might step into it. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Strictly enforce electoral code of conduct

EC tells law enforcement agencies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday directed law enforcement agencies to strictly enforce the electoral code of conduct from the first day of the campaign.

Security forces will be deployed nationwide in three tiers – static security at polling centres, mobile patrols across electoral areas, and a central reserve force for emergencies.

Regarding army deployment, EC officials said its magistracy powers have been extended until February 28 next year. "They will continue to exercise those powers," EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed said after a meeting with top law enforcement officials at the commission office.

The meeting was held ahead of the upcoming national election and referendum, both scheduled for the first half of February. The EC plans to announce the election schedule in the first week of December.

Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin, four other commissioners, and senior officials from the home ministry, army, navy, air force, police, BGB, Ansar VDP, Coast Guard, Rab, and other agencies attended the meeting.



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PURBACHAL PLOT SCAM 'Blatant disregard for legal provisions'

Court slams Rajuk, housing ministry for unlawful plot allotments

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

A Dhaka court has strongly criticised Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakha (Rajuk) and the Ministry of Housing and Public Works for continuous unlawful practices in public land allotment.

Judge Mohammad Abdullah Al Mamun of the Special Judge's Court 5 made the observations yesterday while delivering verdicts in three cases filed against 23 people, including deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, over irregularities in Purbachal plot allocation.

In its findings, the court said Rajuk had "persistently and wilfully" violated statutory rules and procedures for allotting public land.

"The chairman and senior officials knowingly disregarded mandatory requirements, failed to follow procedural safeguards, and processed applications in a manner designed to favour privileged individuals," said the judge.

The court noted that allotments consistently favoured the then prime minister and her family members, officials of the Prime Minister's Office, ministers, state ministers, MPs, senior ruling party leaders, bureaucrats, and other influential people.

"Such blatant disregard for binding legal provisions

undermines the Constitution, subverts lawful governance, and turns public resources into instruments of private advantage and political patronage," the judge added.

Addressing misuse of "special categories", the court said although the law recognises

OBSERVATIONS

» 'Special categories' misused to bypass scrutiny

» Ministry failed to supervise Rajuk, allowed irregularities

ORDERS

» Remove involved officials from decision-making roles

» Conduct forensic audit of all past allotments

» Introduce digital, transparent lottery system

» Recover illegally allotted plots, reallocate to landless citizens

placed in the authority.

FAILURE OF MINISTRY OVERSIGHT

The court said the Housing and Public Works Ministry failed in its statutory duty to supervise, regulate, and ensure lawful functioning of Rajuk.

"By allowing irregularities to flourish, exercising only nominal oversight, and tacitly endorsing unlawful practices, the ministry directly contributed to systemic violations," Judge Mamun said.

The ministry also improperly influenced Rajuk's statutory processes by issuing recommendations for plot allotments under "special categories", enabling further procedural violations and perpetuating elite capture, the court added.

"This constitutes deliberate abandonment of lawful oversight and institutional dereliction of duty," the verdict said.

CORRECTIVE MEASURES ORDERED

The court also ordered that all officers involved in unlawful processing or approval of allotments be immediately removed from decision-making positions, pending departmental and criminal proceedings.

It directed a comprehensive forensic audit of all allotments from the relevant period, to be

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

BNP to hold 6-day programme from Dec 7

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday announced a six-day programme, titled "Plans to Build the Country", involving its wings and affiliated bodies, including Chhatra Dal, Krishak Dal, Ulama Dal, and Sweekchhasebok Dal.

The programmes will run from December 7 to 13, with no event scheduled on December 12.

"Party acting chairman Tarique Rahman will join virtually as the chief guest at each of the six programmes," Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi told reporters at a press conference at the party's Nayapaltan central office while announcing the schedule.

Rizvi said the announcement is part of BNP's ongoing organisational activities, adding that leaders and activists at all levels have been assigned responsibilities to carry out the initiatives.

According to a press release, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir will inaugurate Chhatra Dal's programme on December 7.

The following day, Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed will inaugurate another Chhatra Dal event.

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Make maternal survival a nat'l priority: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh must urgently address postpartum haemorrhage, convulsions, preterm labour and anaemia in pregnancy – the leading causes of maternal deaths – speakers said at a seminar in the capital yesterday.

They warned that without timely and accessible healthcare for all mothers, the country will struggle to reduce preventable maternal mortality.

Speakers said maternal survival must be treated as a national priority, calling for stronger health-system accountability, wider coverage of skilled birth attendance and guaranteed antenatal and postnatal care for every woman.

The seminar, titled "Media Orientation on Maternal and Newborn Health Situation in

RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Strengthen accountability across health system
- » Ensure availability of skilled birth attendants
- » Guarantee full antenatal, postnatal care
- » Expand access to timely emergency care

Bangladesh and Postpartum Haemorrhage, Pre-eclampsia and Leadership Development Initiative", was organised by the Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Bangladesh (OGSB) at the BMA Conference Bhaban in Dhaka.

Presenting the keynote, Prof Farhana Dewan, immediate past president of OGSB, said safe motherhood is a fundamental right. "Healthy mothers and healthy babies must remain our primary goal," she said.

Citing the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2022-23, she said the country's total fertility rate is 2.3 and needs to fall to 1.7 by 2030. Contraceptive use stands at 64 percent, with a target of 70 percent. Neonatal and under-five mortality are at 20 and 33 per 1,000 live births, respectively.

With 35 percent of births still occurring

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The local administration re-excavates this illegally filled pond in Rajshahi city's Mollapara area to return it to its original state. A joint effort by the divisional commissioner, city corporation, Department of Environment, and police stopped the illegal activity.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

PAY-GRADE REFORM

Secondary, pry school teachers intensify protests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Secondary teachers threatened a shutdown, while government primary teachers resumed a nationwide work abstention yesterday, as both groups pressed for long-pending pay-grade reforms.

Teachers under the Bangladesh Secondary Teachers' Association staged a sit-in at Shikha Bhaban in the capital, warning of a full shutdown from Monday if their four-point demand is not met.

Their main demand is upgrading assistant teachers from the 10th to the 9th grade.

Protesting teachers said several government posts with "lesser responsibilities" had already been upgraded to Grade 9, but secondary-level assistant teachers were still being "overlooked".

Witnesses said many teachers gathered at the site yesterday morning, chanting slogans. They alleged long-standing discrimination and said previous movements had led to "no meaningful progress".

"This time, we will return to our institutions only after the demands are met," said one teacher.

PRIMARY TEACHERS RESUME ABSTENTION

Meanwhile, primary school assistant teachers resumed their work abstention yesterday to push for their three-point demand, including pay-scale upgradation.

"We will not go to classes or take part in examinations until the government issues a notification meeting our

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Dhaka's rapid growth worsening liveability

Make it sustainable or prepare for the day to abandon it

A new report by the United Nations has ranked Dhaka as the world's second most populous city after Jakarta, pushing Tokyo to third place. According to its projections, Dhaka and Shanghai are expected to experience the fastest growth among the 10 largest cities of 2025. By mid century, Dhaka is projected to overtake Jakarta as the world's largest city, while Shanghai is expected to rise from fifth to third. It is a paradox that a city ranked third from the bottom in the Economist Intelligence Unit's Global Liveability Index 2025 continues to expand at such a pace.

The numbers are both startling and alarming, as they are almost three and a half times higher than our official estimates. The UN puts Dhaka's population at 36.6 million, whereas the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics' 2022 Population and Housing Census records a population of just 10.2 million. This vast discrepancy is deeply concerning because population data directly influence nearly every aspect of urban planning, ranging from infrastructure and public services to the supply of essentials and economic activities.

Recent devastating fires in Kuril, Mirpur, or near the airport, along with natural hazards such as the recent series of tremors, serve as stark reminders of how overstretched our emergency and essential services have become. With severe land scarcity, Dhaka has expanded upwards in a highly unbalanced manner, resulting in grossly inadequate ratios of roads and basic civic services. The consequences are evident: traffic gridlocks lasting hours, households unable or struggling to cook for days, water rationing due to unreliable supply of safe drinking water, widespread air pollution, electricity outages causing heat-related illnesses, and an absence of many essential services. Open spaces, playgrounds, water bodies, and greenery have virtually disappeared. These shortcomings have turned Dhaka into one of the most unlivable cities in the world.

The UN report identifies faster urban population growth compared to national averages as a global trend. However, it does not account for Dhaka's exponential expansion, which is likely driven by uneven national development. Experts cite both "push" and "pull" factors. In a highly centralised governance system, the capital becomes the focal point for administrative and planning decisions, drawing people from across the country in search of opportunity. Conversely, the lack of jobs, limited economic activity, and climate vulnerability in other regions also push people towards Dhaka, resulting in a relentless flow of internal migration that overwhelms the city.

Sustainable development demands integrated planning that treats cities, towns, and rural areas as interconnected and interdependent. The UN report emphasises the need for national policies that coordinate housing, land use, mobility, and basic services across regions—measures that can ease pressure on megacities and promote a more balanced development.

In Bangladesh, past attempts at decentralisation have failed due to a lack of sincerity and commitment from political leaders and bureaucrats accustomed to the comforts of urban centrality and reluctant to relinquish them. But decentralisation is no longer optional; it has become imperative. We have reached a point where we either act to make Dhaka sustainable or prepare for the day when this unlivable megacity forces its residents to abandon it or suffer the consequences.

Slum fire survivors need urgent support

Address the structural flaws behind Korail's vulnerability to such hazards

We are shocked by yet another devastating fire in the Korail slum, the fourth major one in just two years. Home to nearly 1.5 lakh people, Korail has always been vulnerable to fire hazards. However, the latest incident exposed how unprepared we still are to handle them. The fire revealed structural flaws that have remained unaddressed for years. As flames ripped through 1,338 tightly packed shanties on November 25, around 6,000 residents lost their homes overnight. The scenes the next morning were painfully familiar—families rummaging through charred ruins and children holding the few things they managed to save.

This tragedy highlighted the deadly structural weaknesses that make Korail so vulnerable. The slum has one entry point, which is so narrow that even two rickshaws cannot pass at once. It took firefighters 35 minutes just to reach the scene, while large engines could not enter at all. Crews had to drag hoses from a distance as flames fed on wooden frames, garbage, and tangled electrical wires.

The human cost of the fire cannot be overstated. Among the victims was Minara Begum, still searching for her mother, Hosne Ara. Elsewhere, Rima Akter stood with her eight-month-old son, recalling how a suspected electrical short circuit near her home triggered explosions of a chain of gas cylinders, forcing her to flee with her children. This was the third fire for 50-year-old Mohammad Ismail, who wandered through the ruins with a single suitcase containing the last pieces of his belongings. He had rebuilt twice before, only to watch his possessions turn to ashes again.

Hundreds are now living under the open sky in nearby fields and schoolyards. They need shelter, warm clothes, food, and financial aid to meet daily needs. The government has been providing emergency relief, but that is not enough. It must implement a well-coordinated plan so they can rebuild their lives. Private organisations should also step forward. Wealthy citizens must not forget the workforce that provides them with services at homes and offices every day.

Equally importantly, the structural flaws that make firefighting so difficult in Korail must be addressed urgently. Experts have repeatedly mentioned crucial reforms: accessible roads, safer construction materials, proper electrical maintenance, and, most importantly, community-based first-response teams trained and equipped to act before fires spread. These recommendations must be implemented without fail. At the same time, the causes behind the frequent blazes must be investigated and addressed efficiently. Such devastating fires must not be repeated.



FILE PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

A picture that lays bare the decay of our education system

Why have we failed to give quality education to schoolgoers?



THE THIRD VIEW

Mahfuz Anam
is the editor and publisher of
The Daily Star.

MAHFUZ ANAM

On November 19, we published a picture of a classroom of a government primary school in Dumuria, Khulna. All the benches, made of steel to ensure durability, have been huddled together to create an elevated base on which about 15 primary-level students are squatting and studying with the teacher at the back. Why are the students sitting on an elevated platform instead of on the benches made for them? Because the floor is under ankle-deep water. How long has this situation persisted? Five months. Why? Because the nearby Shaolmari River is choked with siltation. When will these students get back to their normal schools? Given our history of handling river siltation, it is likely to take a long time. So, for the foreseeable future, this is how these students will experience their school life, unless, of course, they fall victim to waterborne diseases. In that case, can we pause for a moment to consider what health facilities are available for them?

One has to admire the commitment of the teachers, and especially of the students and their parents, to continue school in such adverse circumstances. The tragedy is that this "adversity" has been normalised for the last five months and practically for every monsoon season.

Our reporter from Khulna says that students from at least 22 villages are commuting to school on boats every day and attending classes, as seen in the photo. During the coming winter chill, many may have to wade through waist-deep water to reach their classes, exposing themselves to cold, fever, skin infection, and other diseases.

How will these primary school students perform in the final primary school examination to be held from December? The same concern applies for the students of secondary schools in Dumuria and other upazilas where exams have already started, as well as for the students scheduled to take the SSC test examination. According to local officials, 45 educational institutions in Dumuria alone, including 18 secondary schools and one college, are currently affected by waterlogging.

Yet the project to clear the siltation is stuck in a bureaucratic maze, and no one knows how long locals will have to suffer before it is resolved. What is certain, however, is that primary and secondary school students of the upazila will have lost some invaluable time and opportunities in their academic life.

What we have pointed out above is the situation of schools in one upazila. What is the state of schools in general in terms of their physical condition? According to Department of Primary Education officials, as of July 2024,

out of 1.07 lakh primary educational institutions in the country, 49,656 were new, in good condition, and functional, while 18,271 school buildings were old, 16,998 repairable, 11,613 in dilapidated conditions, 5,252 risky, 3,307 abandoned, and 1,348 non-functional.

If we put together the schools identified as dilapidated, risky, abandoned, and non-functional (the difference between the last two categories is not clear), then we have around 22,000 schools that are not safe for our children. If we add the schools that become flooded and non-functional due to seasonal heavy rain, river siltation, storms, and cyclones, then we end up with a far larger number of schools unable to carry out their function as planned. This affects several lakh students every year.

Add to the above the revelation of the latest Multiple Indicator Cluster survey—covering 63,000 households countrywide, and conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and Unicef—that only 44 percent of students complete secondary level education, while 56 percent, or more than half, do not.

If an education system leads to the failure of more than half of the student body, then what sort of system is it? Yes, there are many socio-economic realities, such as child marriage, which is cited as one of the main reasons for this situation. But then, what are the related ministries, like women and children's affairs, doing about it? If there were accountability in our system, we wouldn't be here.

According to the latest figures, the positions of 34,106 primary school head teachers and 24,536 assistant teachers are vacant. Not that recruiting them all would solve many of the problems, as there would definitely have been political influence and corruption in teacher recruitment. It is a reality we have allowed for decades. But that said, why should the relevant ministry sit on these appointments? Again, no accountability.

The question we want to raise is why, after 54 years of independence, our primary and secondary education is still in such a miserable state. Why are we continuing to produce mediocre students? We have seen improvement in enrolment, but we have failed to properly develop students' ability to learn and absorb knowledge, and cultivate a curious mind. Shouldn't the July charter, especially since it was heralded by student activists, have addressed this particular issue as it directly affects the future of students?

After independence, we have had a total of eight education commissions: i) Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission of 1972; ii)

Interim Education Policy under Kazi Zafar Ahmad, 1978; iii) Mazid Khan Education Commission of 1983; iv) Moiz Uddin Education Commission of 1988; v) Shamsul Haque Education Commission, 1997; vi) MA Bari Education Commission, 2002; vii) Mohammad Moniruzzaman Mia Education Commission, 2003; and viii) Education Policy Formulation Committee headed by Kabir Chowdhury in 2009. In addition, there were additional committees and policy-formulating bodies during the last 54 years.

The point to note is that the above education commissions worked under different regimes, both political and military. Yet hardly any of their recommendations were implemented; not even a few substantive ones saw the light of day despite so much work and resources expended.

To us, this failure is demonstrative of how frivolously we have treated education in general, and primary and secondary education in particular, for the half-century of our existence as a sovereign country.

In our view, the education commissions, like most other things, were seen through political lenses and never as institutional ones because no attempt was made to ensure they appeared non-partisan and neutral.

When forming a new commission, the governments of the day did not take the opposition into confidence and allow a consensus to emerge so that, with a change of government, the commission's relevance would continue. The attitude of the new regime was never to implement the ideas but to reverse them. And so, recommendations got buried each time with the change of regime. It was politics that determined the views for education reforms, never the needs of our children or those of the nation.

All through the last 54 years, there was also an absence of a strong and independent implementation authority. Educational reforms are fundamentally long term. They cannot be subject to frequent changes tied to election results. An implementation authority established on a non-partisan basis with the participation of the political opposition is what Bangladesh needed—but it's something that we never even tried for.

Political division has cost us tremendously in most aspects of our lives. But its most damaging impact has been in the education sector. Very few, if any, countries have seen the formation of eight education commissions in 54 years of their life. If the commissions were building on the gains of the previous ones, it could have been a different story. Over the years, our education system has never received the consistent support that it needed. As with everything else, partisanship played havoc.

Of course, there were powerful, well-entrenched groups who resisted any change. Teachers' bodies were among the most consistent lobbies that resisted any form of change, as it would have required new skills and new qualifications. Bureaucracy was devoid of any commitment, mostly for the same reasons. At the moment, we have two ministries looking after education, namely the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education and the Ministry of Education. Neither of them has the necessary expertise, motivation, or infrastructure to push for innovation and modernisation.

Take the case of the use of technology in modernising our education. Which department will take the lead in this area? Any change or innovation to penetrate into the maze of bureaucracy has to come in the form of a "project" to be funded by a donor or the World Bank, etc. The biggest shortcoming of a project is that it is time-bound and once that time expires, it stands abandoned unless there is a "new" project with additional resources. To their credit, donors, especially the WB, have shown flexibility here and funded education projects that had multiple phases. Even in such cases—with continuity assured—we lacked the vision, commitment and motivation to vigorously move towards our goals.

One reason for it was the frequent transfer of bureaucratic leadership, many of whom, well aware of their limited tenure, made the best use of it often through frequent foreign trips, expensive and high-end transport, and future consultancies, if they were on the verge of retirement.

Why do we need an external donor for something that is a long term need and most essential for us? Whatever it takes, education, health, agriculture, and food, when necessary, should be funded by us and adequately so. Shortage of funding has been a chronic failure on our part. We are among the lowest funders for education in the world as well as in the South Asian region, even lower than Nepal, whose resource constraints are far more severe than ours.

A lot of hue and cry was made as to why Prof Yunus's government did not set up a special commission for the education sector as a whole. What we should have done instead—and we had a rare opportunity (and perhaps still do) in that aspect—was to examine the recommendations of the past eight education commissions, pick up the most relevant and doable ones, make them part of our "consensus dialogue", and get us that convergent policy directive that we so badly need. Or, as this government has done in some other cases, it could have issued an ordinance on the most urgent, relevant, and widely acceptable education reforms.

At the root of the success of all modern nations lies education, which must be periodically modernised to make citizens efficient, innovative, contemporary, and prosperous. This allows a nation to take full advantage of innovations that science, technology, social sciences, and modern administrative and business practices offer. Not reforming education is like holding a nation static and preventing it from advancing. The Golden Era of Islam, especially the Abbasid period (eighth to 13th century), the Meiji period in Japan (1868-1912), and the modern period in China—to cite some relevant examples—should guide us well as to the role of education in moving a civilisation forward.

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Dhaka needs a mayor who can deliver real change



MIND THE GAP

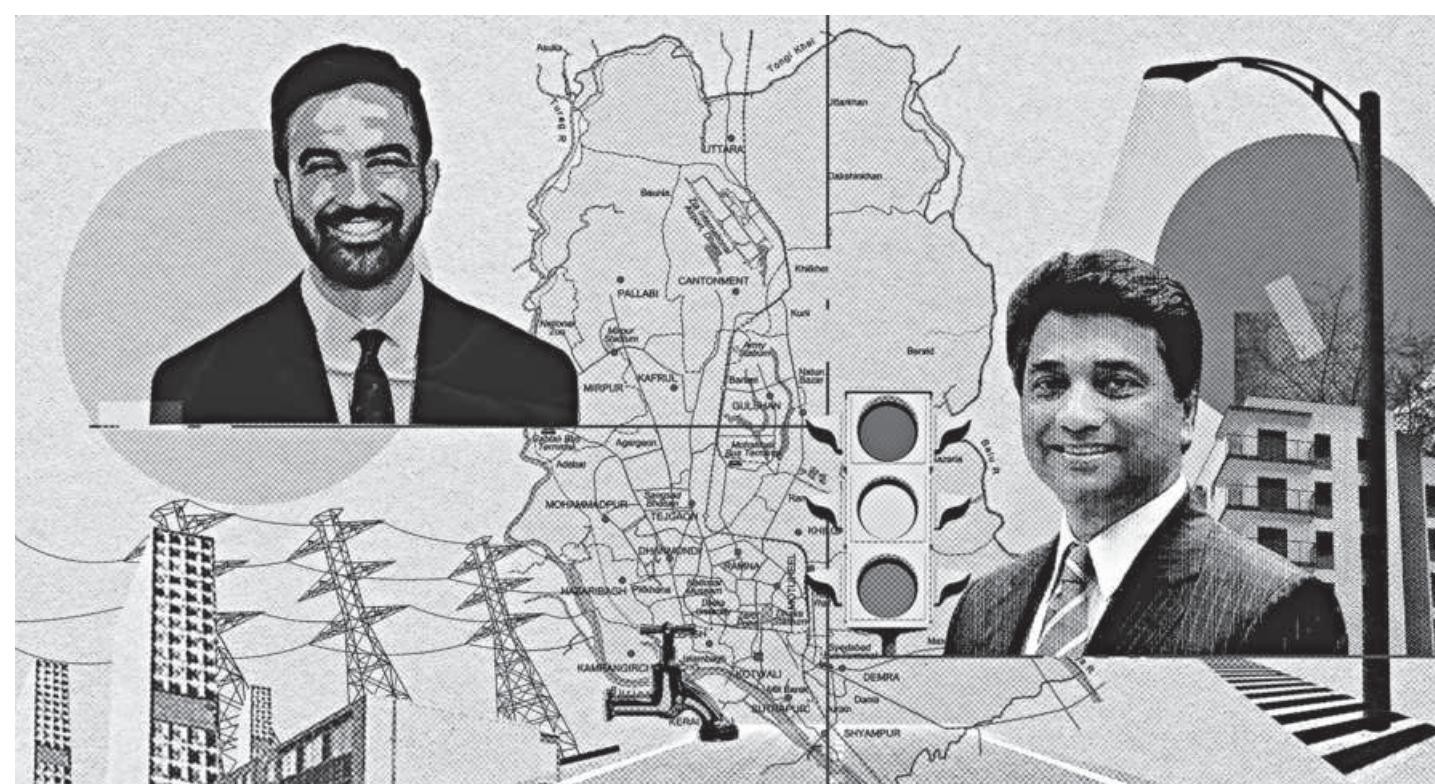
Barrister Noshin Nawal
is a columnist for The Daily Star. She can be reached at nawashoshin@gmail.com.

NOSHIN NAWAL

Dhaka has a new crush, his name is Zohran Mamdani, and he has somehow become the internet's latest fantasy for Bangladeshis. A few interviews, a few viral clips, a few thoughtful soundbites, and suddenly, he is being adored across timelines as if he is the long-lost protagonist of our political romance. It is charming and chaotic in equal measure. However, it is also the perfect moment to turn our gaze inward and ask ourselves a simple question that we seem to avoid every monsoon, every traffic jam, and every dengue season. How is a mayor supposed to be?

A mayor is the head of a city's local government. That sounds straightforward, but the role is the backbone of urban daily life. A mayor oversees sanitation, solid waste management, community healthcare initiatives, streetlights, drainage system, footpath management, market regulation, building permissions, and the overall civic environment that influences how a city feels to live in. They are the closest elected authority for citizens. While national leaders shape policy and strategy, a mayor influences the everyday experiences of ordinary people who want clean roads, reliable lighting, functioning drains, and a neighbourhood that does not feel like a test of character.

Dhaka's two city corporations, North and South, are enormous civic engines consisting of councillors, engineers, inspectors, planners, and frontline workers who handle everything from garbage collection to health campaigns. A mayor sits at the centre of this machinery. But the job is not about heroic gestures or dramatic announcements. The real work lies in coordination. A functional city is a choreography of many bodies moving together. One department clears waste, one repairs roads, another manages markets, another supervises building compliance, and another handles disease control. A mayor's effectiveness depends on whether these parts communicate, complement, and



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

support each other.

This conversation inevitably reminds us of the late Annisul Huq, who offered a glimpse of what an empowered, modern, and deeply humane mayor could look like. His tenure showed how energy, discipline, and a willingness to confront entrenched interests could shift a city's mood, even if only briefly. His work remains a powerful reminder of what is possible when leadership meets vision.

Yet Dhaka's challenges persist because responsibility is spread across many authorities. Urban drainage involves city engineers and national-level water agencies. Traffic depends on the city corporation, but

failure; it is fragmentation.

And nothing has made this clearer than the recent earthquake, when a few seconds of shaking reminded us how fragile this megacity truly is. Our city corporations have been warning Rajuk for years about unsafe buildings, unchecked construction, and the urgent need for responsible enforcement. Rajuk has its own demands and delays, and the corporations have their own limitations, but the lack of cooperation among these bodies is how a city becomes vulnerable. If these agencies cannot sit together to approve a Detailed Area Plan (DAP) that does not put twenty million people at risk, then no mayor, no matter how charismatic, can

not as a ceremonial extension of national power. A city of more than one crore people cannot function through improvisation. It requires systems, not last-minute reactions. And those systems cannot exist unless the mayor's office is allowed to lead them with clarity and authority.

This brings us to another important point. Dhaka needs to think carefully about what kind of person should hold the mayoral offices. Not celebrity figures. Not political placeholders. A mayor must be someone who understands how cities breathe. Ideally, this is a person with a grasp of the problems Dhaka faces every single day. A mayor should understand how waste systems are

modernised, how digital data can improve city management, how community health programmes work, how commercial areas grow and how public spaces can be made safe and accessible. They must know how and when to negotiate for the best of the city and its dwellers.

But technical knowledge alone is not enough. Dhaka also needs mayors who can lead with empathy. People do not experience a city through official reports. They experience it through frustration on a flooded street, fatigue in traffic, relief when a lane is finally cleared, and gratitude when a mosquito fogging drive makes a difference. A mayor must be someone who listens to these stories, understands the human side of urban governance, and responds with a sense of responsibility rather than routine.

This is why Mamdani's trend is such an interesting cultural moment. Not because Mamdani has commented on Bangladesh. He has not. But because our fascination with him reveals something about our emotional landscape. When people feel unseen locally, they project their hopes onto figures abroad. It is sweet, but it also says something important. Perhaps it is time to channel that energy towards strengthening our own city leadership instead of waiting for symbolic heroes. If we can invest so much attention into a foreign legislator's charisma, we can certainly invest the same enthusiasm into demanding a more functional, empowered, and modern local governance system at home.

Dhaka does not need a mayor who promises miracles. It needs one who knows how urban problems are solved and can turn many small improvements into a meaningful shift in how the city works. Clean streets, smoother mobility, faster responses, safer neighbourhoods—none of these changes is glamorous. But they are the foundations of dignity in daily life.

So, the next time the city is waterlogged, or the roads are chaotic, or the neighbourhood feels neglected, instead of simply asking where the mayor is, we should ask whether the city has given its mayors the support and structure needed to act. A mayor cannot build a city alone. They can only lead if the city allows them to lead. Dhaka deserves mayors with skill, vision, and humanity. And those mayors deserve a system that lets them shape the city we proudly claim as home.

Oxygen for all: Why measurement matters as much as availability



Aniqa Tasnim Hossain
is associate scientist at the Maternal and Child Health Division (MCHD) of icddr,b. She can be reached at aniqa.hossain@icddr,b.org.

ANIQA TASNIM HOSSAIN

Medical oxygen is not merely a clinical supply; it is a lifeline that sustains patients every minute in hospitals and their homes. Bangladesh has expanded oxygen plants, concentrators, and hospital pipelines in recent years. However, due to a lack of measurement, we are in the dark about whether oxygen is being used appropriately.

Oxygen is indispensable in saving lives from acute medical emergencies such as pneumonia, sepsis, obstetric complications, and trauma. The Lancet Commission on Medical Oxygen Security estimates that over 105 million people globally need oxygen for acute medical care each year, most of them in low- and middle-income countries, including about two million in Bangladesh. For surgical procedures, around five million, and for chronic respiratory diseases such as COPD, nearly 0.2 million people in Bangladesh rely on oxygen therapy every year. These numbers tell us that oxygen need is not rare, yet it remains poorly documented in the systems meant to manage it.

To understand oxygen coverage, we need to know how many patients required oxygen and how many actually received it. A multi-country study conducted in Bangladesh, Nepal and Tanzania, published in the *Journal of Global Health* in 2022, illustrated this problem. In two large Bangladeshi hospitals, oxygen was administered to almost half of the newborns treated for infection, yet very few had oxygen saturation documented in their case notes. Without pulse oximetry data, it is impossible to tell whether the therapy was appropriate or wasteful. Poor documentation could mask both under-treatment and overuse. This is not a technical oversight; it is a system-wide blind spot. The cost of this lack of documentation is substantial. In private hospitals, the cost of oxygen therapy can result in high out-of-pocket payments for the patients. For public hospitals, oxygen generation and delivery can

consume a large part of total operating costs.

When oxygen is used without a clear clinical indication or documentation, both patients and facilities face unnecessary economic strain. An article published in *The Daily Star* during the pandemic shared the financial struggles of people due to the high cost of oxygen therapy. Jannatul, a 45-year-old woman, was admitted to a hospital in Chattogram with breathing difficulties and required oxygen support for 10 straight days. When the time came for discharge, her family received an oxygen-only bill of over Tk 3 lakh, while the total hospital bill exceeded Tk 6 lakh. They pointed out that hospitals had to source oxygen from private suppliers

Oxygen sustains life, but the absence of data on its use keeps health systems blind. Creation of a real-time oxygen measurement system that connects patient needs to oxygen delivery is as important as building new oxygen plants.

at inflated market rates. In other cases, some facilities explained that their billing systems were not designed to differentiate oxygen consumption by duration or flow rate, so fixed or estimated charges were applied to cover overall maintenance. Others emphasised that without government subsidies or price ceilings, private hospitals had little flexibility to absorb the increased costs of oxygen procurement and logistics. The scenario emphasises the necessity to ensure oxygen is given only when it is needed, and to do that, addressing the measurement gap is obligatory. When oxygen use is not measured, it not only

clouds clinical judgment but also opens the door to uncontrolled costs and inequity. Therefore, both overuse and underuse stem from the same problem: lack of measurement.

Bangladesh has made commendable progress in improving oxygen infrastructure and monitoring supply. The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) now publishes a daily update through its Oxygen Management Information System (OMIS), showing figures such as total oxygen availability and the number of hospital beds equipped with oxygen. These dashboards are an important step forward and demonstrate the government's commitment to data-driven decision-making. Yet, they describe only the supply side of oxygen, not who receives it. The system does not show how many patients were hypoxic, how many had their oxygen saturation measured, or how long oxygen therapy lasted. Without patient-level indicators, it is impossible to track coverage, identify inequities, or ensure rational use.

At the population level, surveys should include questions on hospitalisation, oxygen need, and whether oxygen was received during treatment. These additional would help capture how people access life-saving oxygen beyond facility records and highlight inequities across regions and socioeconomic groups. At the same time, facility-based systems must routinely document hypoxaemia, indication, and outcomes in real time. Linking population surveys with routine facility data will be essential to generate a complete picture of oxygen access and use in Bangladesh, as recommended by The Lancet Commission.

Oxygen sustains life, but the absence of data on its use keeps health systems blind. Creation of a real-time oxygen measurement system that connects patient needs to oxygen delivery is as important as building new oxygen plants. When we know how many patients were hypoxic, how many received oxygen, and how long they were treated, we can allocate resources more equitably across regions and facility types. Data showing high oxygen use but low saturation monitoring in certain districts could trigger targeted training and supervision, while identifying hospitals with chronic undersupply would enable redistribution and timely procurement. Patient-level information would also improve efficiency by reducing unnecessary oxygen use, preventing wastage, and ensuring that

oxygen reaches those who truly need it first. Integrating these data streams into national health information systems would transform current dashboards from inventory trackers

into decision-making tools to plan, act, and save lives more effectively. When every breath counts, measurement ensures that no one is left struggling for air.

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Memo No. 28.14.0000.201.24.013.25/998

Date: 27.11.2025

e-Tender Notice

e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the following procurements:

SL. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of Work(s)	Tender Document last selling/ downloading Date and Time	Tender Closing Date and Time	Tender Opening Date and Time
01.	1183196	Civil Maintenance Works of Bibiana-Dhanua Pipeline Right of Way and Bogadia Valve Station, Mithamain, Kishoreganj. [28.14.0000.201.24.013.25]	07-Dec-2025 17:00	08-Dec-2025 11:00	08-Dec-2025 11:00
02.	1183890	Renovation and Ancillary Maintenance Works at GTCL Head Office Building, Agargaon, Dhaka. [28.14.0000.201.24.014.25]	07-Dec-2025 17:00	08-Dec-2025 11:00	08-Dec-2025 11:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders 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 registered Bank Branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)

GTPR-10/2025-26

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Design and Development Division
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E-mail: gm.dd@gtcl.gov.bd

GD-2576



Mosharraf Karim takes on stand-up comedian role in Chorki's 'Dimlight'

For the first time, popular actor Mosharraf Karim will be seen in the role of a stand-up comedian, earning his livelihood by making people laugh. He takes on this fresh and unconventional character in the Chorki Original film *Dimlight*, directed by Saraf Ahmed Zibon and produced under the banner of Chabial.

Dimlight is part of Chorki's *Ministry of Love* project, which explores different facets of relationships. Director Saraf Ahmed Zibon explained that the film symbolically portrays a midlife crisis as a 'Dimlight crisis', with Karim playing the character experiencing it.

Alongside Mosharraf Karim, the web film also stars Tanzika Amin, Parsa Evana, and Saraf Ahmed Zibon in pivotal roles.



PHOTOS: COURTESY

UNRAVELING SILENCE

Yasmin Jahan Nupur's exhibition showcases quiet resilience

Unraveling Silence brought together a body of work that reflects Yasmin Jahan Nupur's ongoing engagement with memory, displacement, and the quiet resilience embedded in everyday life. Through soft sculptures, textiles, and immersive installations—rooted deeply in the material and emotional histories of Jamdani—the exhibition unfolded with a delicate, contemplative rhythm. For Nupur, textiles are more than material; they are vessels of intimate and collective stories.

Across the exhibition, suspended weavings, layered fabric panels, and ghostlike garments created an atmosphere where absence felt palpably present, and silence emerged as an active, almost tactile force.

Jamdani, with its centuries-old legacy in Bangladesh, appeared throughout the exhibition not as ornamentation but as a conceptual anchor. Its slow, communal, labour-intensive weaving process echoed the emotional cadence of the works themselves.

Through it, Nupur explored questions of labour, identity, and the cultural memory held within

fragile materials long after histories begin to fade. Rather than guiding viewers toward a single conclusion, *Unraveling Silence* opened a space for reflection. The installations encouraged slow looking, inviting visitors to consider how silence functions in their own lives—whether as protection, erasure, resistance, or a gathering place for unspoken stories. Curated by Tanzim Wahab and

inaugurated at Bengal Shilpalay, the exhibition was deeply responsive to the venue's raw architectural setting. The works engaged with the space's unfinished textures, amplifying the tension between delicacy and solidity that runs through Nupur's practice.

Unraveling Silence is open to visitors at Bengal Shilpalay until November 29, 2025, from 4pm to 8pm daily.

Amir Hamja's photo featured in TIME's '100 Photos of the Year'

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs has issued a statement congratulating photographer Amir Hamja, whose powerful image has been featured in TIME's '100 Photos of the Year'. His photograph, depicting the funeral prayers of Didarul Islam, was selected for its emotional depth and global impact.

"The recognition is not only a testament to Mr Hamja's exceptional artistic vision, but also a proud moment for Bangladesh, as the stories of our nation and our vibrant diaspora continue to be portrayed with depth, dignity, and global resonance," the statement read.

Highlighting photography's longstanding role as one of Bangladesh's most dynamic and influential art forms, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs also announced that the Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy will introduce Photography as a dedicated department for the first time. This initiative reflects the government's commitment to nurturing creative talent, supporting artistic innovation, and ensuring that photography receives the institutional platform it deserves.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Alexandre Herer Bombay Experience'

Bombay Experience unites the razor sharp cadence of Carnatic rhythm with the insurgent pulse of Indian hip hop. Led by Alexandre Herer, BC Manjunath and rapper poet Manmeet Kaur, the ensemble crafts a sound where classical precision, jazz improvisation and socially charged lyricism collide—offering a rare, genre-defying musical conversation.

Date: Wednesday | December 3, 2025

Time: 7 pm onwards

Venue: Liberation War Museum Auditorium

Channel i Band Fest 2025 to kick off this December



Channel i will kick off the 12th edition of its annual Band Fest on December 1, continuing a legacy initiated by Ayub Bachchu to celebrate Bangladeshi band music. Over the years, the festival has turned December 1 into a special occasion for music fans, bringing leading bands together on one stage.

This year, 12 prominent bands will take part, with the official

lineup announced yesterday at a press conference held at the Channel i studio. Channel i's Director and Head of News Shykh Seraj, UMC Hospital Managing Director Dr Ashish Kumar Chakraborty, and noted band artistes attended the briefing. The participating bands are Uchcharon, Parthib, Shironamhin, Torun, Mehreen, Obscure, Feedback, Nirjhor, Sterling, Symphony, Nova, and Different Touch.

July martyrs, injured to get flats in Dhaka

tribute to their selfless sacrifices, helping them return to normal life," the project proposal said.

Each flat for the martyrs' families will be 1,355 square feet, while those for the injured families will be 1,250 square feet.

The first project will include six 14-storey buildings and twelve 10-storey buildings near the Police Lines area, while the second will have 15 buildings of 14 storeys each near the DOHS area.

Although the martyrs' housing project was submitted to Ecnec last July, it was sent back for further verification and rationalisation of costs.

The revised Detailed Project Proposal allocates Tk 662 crore for building construction, with the rest to cover boundary walls, internal roads, drainage, lifts, electricity systems and other infrastructure.

Nearly 88 percent of the total cost of the second project will go towards building construction and land development.

In response, BNP's Pabna-4 candidate Habibur Rahman Habib claimed Jamaat supporters attacked his workers, and that 15-20 of his people were injured in self-defense. He accused Mondal of leading the attack and denied Jamaat's allegations.

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PHOTO: STAR

TEESTA IN LALMONIRHAT

Centuries-old rail bridge puts commuters at risk

SDILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

More than two decades after the Teesta Railway Bridge in Lalmonirhat Sadar Upazila exceeded its lifespan, around 20 passenger trains continue to cross the weakened structure every day, putting thousands of commuters at risk.

Built during the British era and stretching 2,100 feet, the bridge was designed for a 100-year lifespan, which expired in 2001. Yet it remains the only rail link between Lalmonirhat and Kurigram, forcing trains to run at reduced speed.

Railway officials say the condition of the bridge has deteriorated significantly in recent years. The structure was once used by both trains and vehicles, with wooden decks laid over the tracks. Heavy vehicular movement was stopped in 2012 after the Roads and Highways Department built a separate bridge for road traffic.

In 2019, the government initiated a project to build a new broad-gauge

railway bridge beside the old one. Engineers surveyed the bridge and assured that work would begin soon. Six years on, the project remains stuck at the railway ministry with no visible progress.

"I've been travelling across this bridge since childhood. It once felt strong, but now it shakes every time," said 68-year-old Makhan Lal Das.

Locomotive Master Manik Islam said, "We always slow down before entering the bridge. We cross it with risk. Everyone knows the condition is fragile."

Lalmonirhat Railway Divisional Engineer (Western Zone) Shipon Ali confirmed that although the bridge remains in use, its expired lifespan makes it inherently unsafe. "The design work for a new bridge has been completed. But the project is awaiting approval at the ministry. I cannot say why the approval is being delayed."

He also said the railway authorities have already sent proposals for approval and budget allocation.



Farmers return home carrying freshly harvested Aman paddy at Jilkarkandi haor in Sylhet Sadar upazila. This year's good yield of hybrid Aman is expected to give farmers 17 to 22 maunds of paddy per bigha, promising a successful harvest. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Blatant disregard

FROM PAGE 3 conducted by an independent committee consisting of civil society members, urban planners, and anti-corruption representatives.

Moreover, the court instructed Rajuk to introduce a fully digital lottery system for land allotments, with live broadcasting, secure audit trails, and encrypted selection mechanisms to

eliminate discretion and manipulation.

The court also called for recovery and redistribution of illegally allotted plots.

"Rajuk shall audit all past allotments to identify multiple ownership and allotments made in violation of rules. All recovered plots shall be re-allotted exclusively to landless citizens and eligible applicants," the verdict said.

Talking about different innovations of icddr,b, its Executive Director Tahmeed Ahmed said, "The impacts that matter to us are not research articles; what truly matters is how our research translates into action for the people who need it most."

Ajit Singh, high commissioner of Canada to Bangladesh, stressed that economic progress and development ambitions cannot be sustained without strong public health systems that protect the most vulnerable.

BNP to hold

ON DECEMBER 9, Standing Committee member Nazrul Islam Khan will inaugurate the programmes of Svechchhasebak Dal and Ulama Dal.

The programmes of Jubo Dal and Krishak Dal on December 10 will be inaugurated by Standing Committee member Mirza Abbas. Fakhrul will again inaugurate the BNP's programme on December 11.

The concluding day's event, on December 13, will be inaugurated by Standing Committee member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury. The process was halted because many applicants did not provide complete and accurate addresses required for delivering ballot papers. Further instructions will be issued later, the EC said in a statement.

Emphasis has been

placed on securing the transport of postal ballots, maintaining full surveillance, ensuring safe custody with returning officers, and ensuring proper security during the verdict said.

The EC has also sought cooperation from political parties and candidates to ensure code of conduct compliance from day one.

Akhtar acknowledged that the EC has no forces of its own and depends on

coordinated efforts among law enforcement agencies, all of whom have pledged readiness.

Meanwhile, the EC yesterday suspended the registration of expatriate postal voters in Bahrain, Kuwait, Malaysia, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

The process was halted because many applicants did not provide complete and accurate addresses required for delivering ballot papers. Further instructions will be issued later, the EC said in a statement.

Secondary, pry school

FROM PAGE 3 demands," Khayrun Nahar Lipi, general secretary of the Bangladesh Primary Teachers' Association, told The Daily Star.

Primary teachers are demanding elevation to the 10th grade, removal of complications over higher-grade benefits after 10 and 16 years of service, and 100 percent departmental promotion from assistant teacher to head teacher.

The platform earlier began work abstention on November 9, a day after more than 100 teachers were injured when police

charged batons, fired sound grenades, and used water cannons to disperse a march towards Shahbagh from the Central Shaheed Minar.

They postponed the programme two days later after receiving assurances from officials of the finance ministry and the primary and mass education ministry.

Speakers called for expanding long-acting contraceptive methods, strengthening emergency obstetric care, reducing unnecessary caesarean sections and improving referral systems.

Make maternal survival a nat'l

FROM PAGE 3 at home, she stressed the need to increase institutional deliveries and skilled attendance.

Only 38 percent of women complete four antenatal visits. Despite progress, 54 percent of maternal deaths occur at home, mostly due to bleeding and convulsions, she said.

They said Bangladesh must ensure skilled midwives, essential medicines and strong community awareness to meet SDG targets.

Prof Ferdousi Begum, who leads the Maternal Postpartum Leadership Development Initiative, said the project focuses on postpartum haemorrhage, hypertensive disorders, anaemia and preterm birth.

It is being implemented in six countries, including Bangladesh, with support from the International Federation of Gynaecology and Obstetrics, she said.

Ferdousi also presented

the project's innovation, the Dhaka Drape -- a low-cost calibrated drape made from local poly bags to measure blood loss during childbirth. The tool is part of the global EMOTIVE method for managing PPH.

She said OGGS's nationwide network -- including branches in Khulna, Sylhet, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Faridpur, Bogura, Pabna, Tangail, LAMB Hospital and private clinics -- is helping spread improved practices beyond the six project sites.

The event was moderated by Project Manager Dr Mahfuza Khanam.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

হাসপাতাল ও ক্লিনিকসমূহ

স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর

টিবি গেইট, মহাখালী, ঢাকা-১২১২।

তারিখ-২৬-১১-২০২৫ খ্রি।

স্মারক নং-স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর/হাসপাতাল ও ক্লিনিকসমূহ/৮৮তম বিসিএস(বিশেষ)/২০২৫/১৮৫৩

বিষয়ঃ ৮৮তম বিসিএস(বিশেষ) পরীক্ষা-২০২৫-এর ফলাফলের ভিত্তিতে বাংলাদেশ সিভিল সার্ভিসের বিসিএস(স্বাস্থ্য) এর সহকারী সার্জন এবং সহকারী ডেটাল সার্জন পদে সাময়িকভাবে মনোনীত ৪৭(চারশত সতের) জন প্রার্থীদের স্বাস্থ্য পরীক্ষার সময়সূচি।

সংশৃষ্টি সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, ৮৮তম বিসিএস(বিশেষ) পরীক্ষা-২০২৫-এর ফলাফলের ভিত্তিতে বাংলাদেশ সিভিল সার্ভিসের বিসিএস(স্বাস্থ্য) এর সহকারী সার্জন এবং সহকারী ডেটাল সার্জন পদে সাময়িকভাবে মনোনীত প্রার্থীদের স্বাস্থ্য পরীক্ষার জন্য নিম্নোক্ত সময়সূচি অনুযায়ী স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর কর্তৃক গঠিত সংশৃষ্টি মেডিকেল বোর্ডের সম্মুখে উপস্থিত হতে হবে।

স্বাস্থ্য পরীক্ষার তারিখ ও সময়	৮৮তম বিসিএস(বিশেষ) পরীক্ষার ফলাফলের ভিত্তিতে সাময়িকভাবে নির্বাচিত প্রার্থীদের মেজিট্রিশন মন্তব্য	স্বাস্থ্য পরীক্ষা অনুষ্ঠিত হওয়ার স্থান
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CONCERN
worldwide | The Daily Star

Strengthening Maternal and Child Health in Bangladesh A Call to Build a Resilient Health System

A roundtable titled "Strengthening Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health in Southern Bangladesh" was held on October 30, 2025, at The Daily Star Centre, Dhaka. Jointly organised by Concern Worldwide and The Daily Star, the dialogue brought together senior representatives from government agencies, development partners, and international and local organisations.

Participants highlighted the persistent gaps in maternal, neonatal, and child health services in climate-vulnerable coastal districts and explored practical, collaborative solutions to build a more equitable and resilient health system.



Md. Akhtaruzzaman
Managing Director,
CCHST, Health
Services Division,
MoHFW

Bangladesh has 14,500 community clinics, one serving around 6,000 people, the largest health-sector reform in its history. For remote areas like haors, chars, and hill tracts, we plan clinics for every 2,000–3,000 people. The system has overemphasised curative care, neglecting promotion, prevention, hygiene, and childbirth preparedness. Challenges include doctor shortages, weak referral systems, and procurement issues. However, local engagement is the priority now. The community trust, having the Additional Secretary as the MD, also DCs and UNOs, has already been operationalised, needs to utilise the allotted fund properly to support the clinics financially and operationally. This is a scope for local engagement. By mobilising communities, individuals and institutions, alongside government efforts, we can strengthen primary healthcare, improve readiness, and ensure effective delivery of services across the country.



Dr. Prof. Iqbal Kabir
Director, Climate
Change Health
Promotion Unit
(CCHPU), Health
Services Division,
MoHFW

Based on my experience working in Patuakhali, particularly Golachipa and Rangabali, and after 30 years in government service, I want to propose four key solutions in terms of building a resilient health sector. Firstly, we must strengthen human resources, ensuring skilled midwives, specialists, and support staff. Then the supply chain should have separate plans for the dry season, monsoon, and emergencies. Thirdly, transport solutions like amphibian ambulances, mobile MNCH clinics, and emergency contingency funds for local managers are essential. Finally, climate-resilient, youth- and women-led community engagement is critical for sustainable health adaptation in the southern region.



Dr. Nasir Ahmed
Director (MCH
- Services), MCH-
Services Unit, DGFP
Barguna and
Patuakhali highlight
a national crisis in
family planning and

maternal health services as union-level Family Welfare Centres face severe manpower shortages and deteriorating infrastructure. Essential supplies such as DDS and delivery kits have been resumed despite the lack of fuel, transport maintenance, and operational funding, which is a positive sign. However, the number of trained Family Welfare Visitors is declining as recruitment has been halted, and many are retiring. Meanwhile, Family Welfare Assistants are unable to function effectively due to limited basic registers and field support. Digital MIS reporting and satellite clinics are suspended. With institutional deliveries already dropped by around 20,000, urgent action is needed to prevent the hard-won maternal and child health gains.



**Dr. Mohammad
Zakaria Rana**
Assistant Director,
Planning and
Research, DGHS

Coastal and rural health facilities face continuous workforce shortages and infrastructure gaps. The transition from the fifth sectoral plan to a revenue-based system is underway, with a two-year DPP for essential drugs and CBC services pending finalisation. A five-year DPP focusing on primary healthcare and maternal, child, and adolescent health is also progressing. The government is restructuring the upazila and district-level health organogram and recruiting third and fourth-grade staff. Community clinics continue to play a vital role, each serving around 6,000 people, but strengthening the referral system and ensuring sufficient staff, including HI and AHI, are needed. Development partners such as UNICEF and Save the Children support with manpower and operational needs. However, once the revenue-based DPP becomes operational, the full scope of



challenges and required investments will become more evident.



**Manish Kumar
Agrawal**
Country Director,
Concern Worldwide

Locally led programming is essential for sustainable improvements in maternal, neonatal, and child health. While communities are vulnerable, they also possess valuable knowledge about their needs, capacities, and the barriers they face, insights that national-level actors may not fully grasp. Issues such as child marriage and early pregnancy cannot be effectively addressed without community engagement. Bringing together local government, civil society, and community actors ensures that development programs become context-appropriate, inclusive, and more sustainable. Moreover, local participation strengthens accountability, as communities are best positioned to monitor service delivery and mobilise beneficiaries. High out-of-pocket healthcare costs place a significant burden on families. Therefore, increased government investment and meaningful local involvement are crucial for the effectiveness of health programs.



**Dr. Sheikh Shahed
Rahman**
Programme
Director, Concern
Worldwide (Keynote
Speaker)

Over the past two decades, Bangladesh has made notable progress in health and development, with increased life expectancy and a substantial reduction in maternal and child mortality, yet equitable healthcare access remains a challenge amid rising climate risks. Frequent Floods, cyclones, and disease outbreaks are common nowadays. Recognising these intersecting vulnerabilities, Concern Worldwide prioritises climate-affected districts such as Barishal, Patuakhali, and Barguna, where maternal and child health indicators persistently fall behind national averages. According to BDHS 2022, only 41 percent receive antenatal care in Barishal Division; postnatal care and institutional deliveries are also lagging. By focusing on these high-risk geographies, Concern aims to strengthen climate-resilient primary health care services, protect the health and well-being of vulnerable groups, and contribute to reducing preventable maternal, newborn, and child morbidity and mortality. Concern's resilience strategy integrates Health, Nutrition, and Livelihood programs, aligned with National Health and Nutrition Policy, and the National Adaptation Plan, and strengthens climate-resilient RMNCAH services through training health workers, infrastructure support, and improved local planning. However, health financing remains a challenge, with public spending under 1% of GDP. We now must advocate for increased and effective health financing, timely resource allocation, and integration of gender-responsive and climate-smart strategies across the health system.



**Dr. Dewan Md
Emdadul Hoque**
Health Manager,
MNCAH, UNICEF

We continue to face systemic challenges in the health sector.

Firstly, allocated funds for HR are not being used, as 60% of the positions remain vacant. Secondly, due to the weak governance and accountability system, the challenges are not being addressed properly. Thirdly, national health facility surveys show persistent gaps in basic and emergency obstetric care at district and upazila levels. So, we are now advocating for the deployment of trained midwives, stronger primary care, community engagement in the community clinics and climate-resilient infrastructure. I think we should now focus on renovating existing facilities instead of building new ones.



**Dr. Mohammad
Shafiqul Islam**
Health Advisor,
British High
Commission in
Dhaka (FCDO)

Bangladesh's climate commitments remain largely unfulfilled. Despite pledging at COP26 to build zero-carbon and climate-resilient health systems, no meaningful progress has occurred. I'm stressing that climate adaptation must be integrated into a national health plan, backed by evidence-based action. The health ministry's climate unit is understaffed and underfunded, reflecting poor coordination and accountability. To break this cycle of inaction, accountability is a must. The media can hold the government accountable for issues such as the drastic decline in institutional deliveries. Also, we should move beyond mere funding and instead leverage knowledge and technology from development partners to build effective, resilient systems.



**Dr. Abu Sayed Md
Hasan**
SRHR Specialist,
UNFPA

A lack of proper planning during the transition from the sector-wide approach to DPPs has disrupted access to maternal and reproductive health services, causing a 20% drop in institutional deliveries over six months due to shortages of essential drugs and contraceptives, with 60% of facilities out of stock. This may increase maternal and newborn mortality. According to WHO and global evidence, Bangladesh must urgently increase health sector allocation to at least 5% of GDP. Stronger investment in primary healthcare and deployment of skilled midwives, about 25,000, nationwide to ensure quality, community-level SRHR services and reduce reliance on private facilities are also essential.



**Dr. Aminur Rahman
Shaheen**
MBBS, MSc, PhD,
Scientist, Maternal,
Newborn and
Child Health Unit,
Maternal and
Child Health Division, icddr, b

Accurate data is essential for effective planning in maternal and child health. Long-term research in Matlab and Chakoria shows rising salinity is linked to higher miscarriage rates, highlighting the need to consider climate impacts in policy. Despite challenges such as Cyclone Amphan and COVID-19, innovative solutions have shown success. For example, using a digital bangle that provides pregnancy-related voice messages doubled the NC rate; at the baseline, it was 23%, and at the end line, it was 44%, in climate-affected areas. Another program, Reaching Every Mother and Newborn (REMN),

improved ANC, facility delivery, and postnatal care in several districts. These local data can be identified by engaging communities, which can help in proper planning and strengthening primary healthcare.



**Md. Mahbub-Ul-
Alam**
Country Director,
Pathfinder

Although we rank seventh in climate vulnerability, our health sector remains unprepared for climate-induced disasters. In 2022, our assessment of 300 health facilities in five flood-prone districts revealed that 59% remained closed for 160 days during the flood. Besides, our health workers lack climate awareness; they are often unaware that maternal and adolescent health services in crises require trauma-sensitive approaches. Also, the logistical support supplied to clinics in flood-prone areas is inadequate. We need to act now by strengthening existing health facilities and building providers' capacity to ensure resilient healthcare in disaster-prone areas.



Dr. Sayed Rubayet
Country Director,
iPAS

The southern coastal region faces extreme climate impacts, yet our health system does not reflect this reality. With fragile infrastructure, high vacancies, poor budgets, and weak community awareness, health facilities remain largely non-functional. Centralised financial control and outdated management structures stand in the way of understanding the needs at the local level. As a result, the health system development programs have been shut, which has worsened SRHR outcomes in adolescents, including unintended pregnancies and maternal and neonatal deaths in these regions. To address this growing fragility, we must strengthen local-level planning, empower communities, and design health services suited to coastal vulnerabilities.



**Rahima Sultana
Kazal**
Executive Director,
Association of
Voluntary Actions
for Society (AVAS)

Our RMNCAH project in the

southern coastal region supports pregnant mothers, newborns, children, and adolescents through close collaboration with the health sector and the Department of Family Planning. It builds capacity by training FWVs, FWC staff, clinic workers, and teachers using government-developed modules.

Working in disaster-prone areas such as Galachipa, Taltoli, and Amtali, the project promotes SRHR, safeguarding, and gender equality, with community engagement through union supervisors, field facilitators, and youth volunteers. We also work on facility improvements, immunisation support, and disaster preparedness efforts, jointly with public institutions.



**Shahabuddin
Panna**
Executive Director,
Nazrul Smriti
Sangsad (NNS)

Despite limited resources, frontline officials of the Health and Family Planning Departments at the upazila and district levels continue to provide essential services. They face challenges including HR shortages,

infrastructural gaps, and supply chain issues, which are national problems, not just local ones. To address smaller, local challenges, we have been engaging the local government. Through continuous advocacy, the Health and Family Planning Committee's budget has increased, and we monitor both allocation and expenditure. Recent initiatives, such as allowing each union to propose small health projects, are helping resolve minor issues. Strengthening coordination with the local government can further improve accountability, service quality, and efficient medicine distribution.



Md. Shahidul Islam
DDFP, Patuakhali

In Patuakhali, coastal healthcare faces critical gaps, with two-thirds of technical posts

and 17 of 21 doctor positions vacant. Redeploying midwives to Family Welfare Centres can optimise skills and improve deliveries. To address systemic issues, a need-based medicine supply chain with zonal warehouses could be utilised to replace the current uniform distribution. Strengthening referral systems linking clinics, health facilities, NGOs, and local governments and operationalising long-idle assets, such as trawlers for transporting pregnant women, are essential. Collaborative planning and coordinated action are essential to overcome the persistent healthcare challenges.



**Dr. Md. Humaon
Islam Sumon**

Consultant
(Orthopaedic), UHC,
Amtali, Barguna

In coastal areas like Amtali, Taltali, and Galachipa, limited transport and remote geography create barriers to access to health services. Although data systems exist, the lack of coordination between the Health Service Division and the Family Planning Division prevents effective tracking of pregnant women and maternal and child health outcomes. Integrating these databases and strengthening formal collaboration at the upazila level would allow earlier identification and follow-up of mothers and children, which would help improve maternal and child health services in climate-vulnerable coastal regions.



Tanjim Ferdous
In Charge, NGO's
and Foreign
Missions, The Daily
Star (Moderator of
the session)

Bangladesh has reduced maternal and child mortality, yet major gaps in equitable healthcare persist, especially in climate-vulnerable coastal districts. These areas lack skilled health workers, essential supplies, and climate-resilient facilities. Recent UN data shows Bangladesh still has one of the highest stillbirth rates in South Asia, which is 63,000, and over 1 lakh under-five deaths annually. Concern Worldwide's assessments in Barguna and Patuakhali reveal insufficient water, sanitation, and basic medical equipment in community clinics, hindering care for mothers and newborns. Today's roundtable aimed to identify practical and evidence-based strategies to strengthen primary MNCH services and advance a more equitable, climate-responsive health system.

1. Improve Service Quality and Facility Readiness

Renovate existing facilities and ensure uninterrupted maternal and neonatal care supplies.

2. Strengthen Coordination & Referral Systems

Integrate health and family planning data, operationalise need-based supply planning, and restore effective referral pathways.

3. Climate-Responsive Health System Adaptation

Develop a climate-health adaptation plan, ensure transport support in coastal areas, and train providers for crisis-sensitive care.

4. Strengthen RMNCAH Workforce

Deploy trained midwives and resume FNV recruitment to prevent further collapse of maternal services.

5. Strengthen Community Engagement & Local Ownership

Empower local government to allocate and track budgets for RMNCAH services and engage communities in joint planning to meet local needs.

6. Increase Health Financing & Efficient Use

Increase allocation to at least 5% of GDP, aligning with WHO guidance and ensure efficient local budget utilisation.



TIGERS SERVE IRELAND FIRST T20I VICTORY THIS YEAR

Ireland had not won a single T20I this year -- losing four and two no-results -- until they faced Bangladesh in the first match of the ongoing three-game series in Chattogram yesterday. Capitalising on a lacklustre overall showing by Bangladesh, who have had their busiest year in the format with 28 T20Is played, Ireland cruised to a 39-run victory to take a 1-0 lead in the series -- the last for Bangladesh before their 2026 T20 World Cup campaign in India and Sri Lanka next February. [Inset] Led by Harry Tector's unbeaten 45-ball 69, Ireland posted 181 for four by punishing some wayward bowling. Bangladesh's batting fared even worse, with the top four, including skipper Litton Das, dismissed for single digits. Thanks to Towhid Hridoy's career-best score of 50-ball 83 not out, Bangladesh avoided utter humiliation to get to 142 for nine in 20 overs.

Paddlers
fearful of
future despite
historic
international
success

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation (BTTF) is celebrating a historic achievement but the lack of financial support and facilities pose significant challenges in sustaining international success. Paddlers Javed Ahmed and Khoi Khoi Sai Chakma recently won the silver medal in the mixed doubles event at the 6th Islamic Solidarity Games in Saudi Arabia, surpassing the country's previous best performances of bronze medals in team events at the South Asian Games. At a press briefing held at the Bangladesh Olympic Association auditorium yesterday, BTTF officials and the medalists highlighted both their achievement and the ongoing struggles of Bangladesh's table tennis scene, which has seen declining participation and limited infrastructure. Former national champion and coach Mostafa Billah said: "I think this achievement will act to revive the country's table tennis like what Bangladesh cricket did after winning the ICC Trophy in 1997."

**Read the full story on The Daily Star website

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Last year, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) introduced the T20 iteration of the National Cricket League (NCL) to expose domestic players to competitive T20 cricket and help Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) franchises identify local talent.

As the tournament wrapped up its second edition on October 12, the competition appeared to have fulfilled its purpose to some extent with several new players delivering notable performances.

However, the list of local players for the upcoming BPL auction, scheduled for November 30, tells a different story.

BCB's national team selection panel prepared a list of 166 local cricketers, divided into six categories, and sent it to the six BPL franchises on November 26. However, several of the top performers from the recent NCL T20 failed to make the cut.

Among them, Chattogram division's off-spinner Mohammad Rubel stands out as the most glaring omission.

The 29-year-old was one of the tournament's standout bowlers, taking 10 wickets in eight matches at an economy rate of 5.20 -- finishing as the fifth-highest wicket-taker. His consistency earned him the Most Promising Player of the Tournament award. Yet Rubel did not find a place on the local players' list.

"I really don't know anything about it. Only the selectors know why I am not on the list," Rubel told The Daily Star yesterday.

"It's definitely very upsetting for me. In the NCL T20, I didn't bowl badly, rather, I bowled well and was named the most promising player. Naturally, I felt I might get a chance in the BPL. I hoped that maybe someone would pick me. Since I'm not even on the list, it feels bad," he added.

Rubel is not alone. Several other consistent performers across both editions of the NCL T20 were also overlooked, such as Chattogram's left-arm spinner Ashraful Hasan Rohan, and



pace duo of Ahmed Sharif and Fahad Hossain, Barishal division's batter Iftikhar Rahman Ifti, as well as left-arm wrist spinner Nuhayel Sandee and leg spinner Shadhin Islam. Many of these players have recently featured for Bangladesh 'A' or the High Performance Unit as well.

In stark contrast, players with little to no recent competitive cricket have made it into the auction list. Barishal's Monir Hossain Khan and Rangpur's Sanj Saha Dip -- both absent from competitive cricket for the last year and a half -- were included. Shahriar Alam Mahim, out of action for three years, was also listed.

Concerns extend beyond mere selection. The categorisation of players into six salary brackets -- ranging from Tk 11-50 lakh -- has raised eyebrows as well.

Despite not being part of the regular national T20 setup, Mohammad Naim was

placed in Category A, while Towhid Hridoy, Parvez Hossain Emon, Nasum Ahmed, and Jaker Ali Anik -- all of whom were part of Bangladesh's playing XI against Ireland in the first T20I on Thursday -- were placed in Category B.

Meanwhile, promising pacer Nahid Rana was slotted into Category C alongside established Test cricketers such as Mominul Haque, Shadman Islam, and Zakir Hasan. Habibur Rahman Sohan and Jishan Alam, who impressed in the Asia Cup Rising Stars and Top End T20 respectively, were placed in Category D.

Although the selectors still have two days to make additions to the auction list, the initial list begs the question of whether the players are truly being judged on merit or if the selectors are simply ticking boxes without proper assessment.



Arsenal stayed perfect in the Champions League with another dominant performance, handing Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich their first defeat of the season in a 3-1 win at the Emirates on Wednesday. Bayern's unblemished record was spoiled by goals from Jurrien Timber, Noni Madueke, and Gabriel Martinelli. Bayern drew level through 17-year-old midfielder Lennart Karl, but the Premier League leaders bounced back in style.

PHOTO: ARSENAL

Crisis within: How will BFF respond?

ANISUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh's underwhelming performance in their 1-0 defeat to Malaysia in the opening match of the Tri-Nation Series, also involving Azerbaijan, has raised a serious concern -- whether the poor display stemmed from on-field lapses or from issues unfolding off the pitch.

These questions surfaced because of the points made by head coach Peter Butler during the post-match press conference at the National Stadium in Dhaka on Wednesday. Butler claimed there were "characters within the side who are trying to disrupt the camp."

Such comments carry weight, especially coming from the man who overcame significant odds and internal allegations to guide the



women in red and green to a historic first-ever qualification for the AFC Women's Asian Cup last July. This is the same group of players who recently toppled strong opponents like Myanmar, Bahrain, and Turkmenistan to secure their place among Asia's elite -- but have since looked out of sorts and lacking confidence.

Their performance against Malaysia was a stark contrast to those qualifying displays. The team showed no urgency, cohesion, or understanding throughout the match.

Butler has excluded several senior influential players from the squad following a revolt in late January involving 16 players. Five senior players from that lot will not be called back to his team, Butler made it clear recently, after questions about reinstating them came up in recent media briefings.

This ongoing dispute has raised serious concerns about team unity and harmony, especially with preparations for the continental tournament having begun in late September. Recent friendly results have also delivered a harsh reality check. Bangladesh suffered heavy defeats to Thailand -- 3-0 and 5-1 -- in Bangkok, and their struggles continued in the Tri-Nation Series, part of the final build-up to the Women's Asian Cup.

Butler further claimed that some of his current players are "good friends" with those excluded and suggested he would not take "responsibility for people trying to upset the apple cart outside."

While tactical shortcomings -- including a high defensive line, failure to convert chances, and recurring defensive errors -- remain issues, Butler indicated that the deeper crisis is one of intention and discipline. These are areas the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) must address urgently.

BFF women's wing chairman Mahfuz Aker Kiron said she would "sit with players and the coach separately" to address the matter. If unresolved, such internal disruptions could severely damage the team's preparations, create factions within the squad, fracture trust, reduce commitment and motivation, and risk a complete collapse -- with the major Asian championship just three months away.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh		
Finance Division, Ministry of Finance		
Skills for Industry Competitiveness and Innovation Program (SICIP)		
Probashi Kallyan Bhaban (14 th & 15 th Floor)		
71-72 Eskaton Garden, Ramna, Dhaka-1000.		
www.sicip.gov.bd		
Date: 27 November 2025		
Recruitment Notice		
Ministry/Division	:	Ministry of Finance
Agency	:	Finance Division
Program Name	:	Skills for Industry Competitiveness and Innovation Program (SICIP)
Scheme Name	:	Expansion of Skills for Employment and Socially Inclusive Training for Priority and Emerging Sectors
INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT		
Position	No.	Minimum Qualification and Experience
Program Implementation Unit (PIU) for SICIP-Bangladesh Petroleum Institute (BPI)		
Chief Coordinator	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masters in any discipline or Bachelor of Science in Engineering. At least 15 years' working experience in relevant field. Experience in skills development fields will be preferred. Working experience as the head of the training institute/project implementation unit of any project will be an added advantage. Strong communication, interpersonal and computer skills.
Coordinator (Job placement & Database)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masters in any discipline or Bachelor of Science in Engineering. At least 10 years' working experience in relevant field. Experience in skills development fields will be preferred. Strong communication, interpersonal and computer skills.
Application Closing Date and Time	:	<p>Applications shall be submitted to the office of the Executive Program Director on or before 3:00 pm by 15 December 2025 in sealed envelope clearly marked "Application for the Selection of [Name of Position]". Contact address with email and mobile number of the applicant should be written on the left side of the A4 Size Envelope. Necessary documents in support of educational qualifications, experiences and skills have to be submitted.</p>
Name of Official Inviting Recruitment	:	Mohammed Walid Hossain
Designation of Official Inviting Recruitment	:	Executive Program Director
Address of official Inviting Recruitment	:	Probashi Kallyan Bhaban (15th Floor), 71-72 Eskaton Garden, Ramna, Dhaka-1000.
Contact details of official Inviting Recruitment	:	Phone: +880255138753-5 Ext: 100 E-mail: epd.sicip@gmail.com
The recruitment entity reserves all the right to accept or reject any or all the Application without assigning any reasons whatsoever.		
<p>Mohammed Walid Hossain Executive Program Director Skills for Industry Competitiveness and Innovation Program (SICIP) Finance Division, Ministry of Finance Probashi Kallyan Bhaban (15th Floor) 71-72 Eskaton Garden, Ramna, Dhaka.</p>		



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At least 20 hurt in BNP-Jamaat campaign clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

At least 20 people were injured as BNP and Jamaat activists clashed over election campaigning at Char Gargari village in Shahpur union of Pabna's Ishwardi upazila yesterday.

Each side blamed the other for the attack. In protest, Jamaat men held a rally in the area last night.

Tension has been prevailing in Ishwardi as the two groups remained positioned against each other.

Police and locals said the clash broke out around 4:30pm when Jamaat-backed Pabna-4 candidate Abu Taleb Mondol went to Char Gargari for campaigning and BNP activists allegedly attacked them without warning, triggering an hour-long clash.

At least 20 people from both sides were injured, and seven were admitted to Ishwardi Upazila Health Complex.

Abu Taleb alleged that BNP men carried out the attack.

However, BNP-nominated candidate Habibur Rahman Habib told journalists that villagers chased the Jamaat men as they were

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Khaleda Zia shifted to the CCU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson and former prime minister Khaleda Zia was shifted to the coronary care unit (CCU) at the capital's Evercare Hospital yesterday, where she is being treated for lung and heart infections.

"Pneumonia and lung infection are still in a stable condition. She was mainly shifted to the CCU so that if any other parameter goes up or down, proper care can be taken immediately. After moving her to the CCU, her physical condition has remained stable," Dr Rafiqul Islam, health affairs secretary of the BNP, told this newspaper last night.

He said Khaleda is receiving treatment there for closer monitoring and observation. "Doctors and nurses are providing round-the-clock care."

Party sources said Khaleda is under the supervision of a medical board that includes both local and foreign specialists. Since her admission, she had been receiving treatment in a cabin.

Khaleda, 80, has long suffered from multiple health complications, including heart, liver and kidney

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After losing her home in the Korail slum fire, Minara Begum feeding bread to her grandchildren inside a makeshift shelter, stitched together with salvaged clothes, built exactly where their house once stood. With the children's mothers out working in people's homes, the family -- having lost everything -- is now trying to survive on whatever little they have left. The photo was taken yesterday.

KORAIL SLUM Piecing back life after fire

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MUNTAKIM SAAD

As the afternoon sun beat down on the charred remains of Korail yesterday, one of Dhaka's largest and most crowded slums, Shukur Ali sat quietly with his wife, children and grandson amid the dust and twisted iron sheets that once sheltered their home.

The fire that tore through the settlement on Tuesday left them homeless.

More than 1,300 homes were reduced to ashes, leaving nearly 6,000 residents without shelter in a slum that is home to nearly 1.50 lakh people. The flames devoured everything in their path: homes, shops and part of a mosque.

For Shukur Ali, the loss is deeply personal. "I came here in 1992 with my parents," he said. "My father built two rooms and set up a small shop. This land is all we have. If we lose it, where will we go in our old age?"

He spent yesterday afternoon clearing debris. He said debt of around Tk 60,000 from a previous fire in 2017 still burdens him.

Meanwhile, aid has been limited. BRAC provided a small cash grant and warm clothing, while neighbours shared meals as families coped without kitchens or clean water.



"How long can we live like this? How long can we depend on others?" he said.

Under the open sky, amid dust and scattered iron sheets, Korail's residents clung to the fragile hope of rebuilding lives the fire tried to erase.

Around 3:00pm, Anowara Begum, 40, sifted through the burnt remains of a shop beside her destroyed shanty. For the past two nights, she, her husband and children have slept on the street near the ruins, trying to protect what little they have left.

"Right now, there's so much burnt tin, wood and bamboo scattered everywhere. We haven't been able to clean it all yet," she said. The debris, she added, will take several more days to clear.

With the shop owner's permission, Anowara and her family are temporarily staying in the abandoned shop next to their destroyed home. Once the cleanup is complete, they hope to rebuild and move back.

Her son, Anwar Hossain, works as a daily labourer in Banani, and his earnings support the family.

About eight years ago, they moved into this slum. "We worked hard to build that one room," she said. "Now it's gone."

Along with their home, the fire destroyed years of savings and belongings. Though she escaped unharmed, Anowara lost everything. "I don't know where to find help or how to replace what I've lost," she said.

Since the fire, the family has relied on food from relief groups, but for how long remains uncertain.

Some residents were seen selling off scraps burnt in the fire to get immediate cash.

For three decades, Asiya Begum has lived in the slum, building four houses and a small shop. On the ground floor, she sold tea and cigarettes, supporting her family, while she and her husband lived in two of the houses and rented out the others.

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July martyrs, injured to get flats in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Housing and Public Works is set to undertake two projects to provide housing for families of the martyrs of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement and the injured protesters.

Both projects will be implemented on land owned by the National Housing Authority in the Mirpur Housing Estate.

- 2,364 flats for martyrs, injured
- NHA projects to cost Tk 2,105cr
- Flats to be built in Mirpur by 2029

Under the plans, 804 flats will be built for the martyrs' families and 1,560 flats for families of the injured. The proposals may be placed before the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council next week.

The two projects have been estimated to cost Tk 761.16 crore and Tk 1,344 crore. Both will be fully government-funded and are expected to be completed by 2029.

These projects are being undertaken with the aim of providing dignified housing to the bereaved families of the fearless martyrs of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement and to the disabled heroes, as a minimum

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THE FOREST FORAGER

A slender Northern Palm Squirrel nibbles on a fig as it rests on a tree branch along Chattogram city's CRB road. Found across South Asia in gardens, orchards and evergreen forests, it feeds on fruits, nuts, seeds and the occasional insect, helping disperse seeds of two to four young who venture out after a few weeks. Threatened mainly by habitat loss, this tiny forager remains a vital thread in the forest's tapestry.

PHOTO: KOMOL DAS

Anisul-led JP faction moves to form new alliance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Party faction led by Anisul Islam Mahmud is likely to form a new political alliance, comprising several JP factions.

"Several other parties may also join us, as discussions are underway. But the Jatiya Party faction led by GM Quader will not be in the alliance," Presidium Member Masroor Mawla told The Daily Star.

Faction's Chairman Anisul said the name and details of the alliance will be announced within a week.

The factions led by Anwar Hossain Monju, Mostafa Jamal, and other political parties will join the new alliance, said Mujibul Haque Chunnu, the party's executive chairman. "Everything will be clear in the first week of December as talks are going on with like-minded parties."

In mid-July, leaders of four JP



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