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Rights groups condemn attacks on media, culture

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of international and regional human rights and digital rights organisations yesterday condemned the December 19 attacks on the offices of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star and Chhayanaut.

The incidents pose a "grave escalation" against freedom of expression and democratic participation in Bangladesh.

In a joint statement, Access Now, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, Human Rights Watch, International Truth and Justice Project, Journalists for Democracy in Sri Lanka and Tech Global Institute said the violent attacks posed a serious threat to independent journalism, cultural life and civic space.

The signatories also expressed particular alarm over the erosion of the rule of law ahead of the 2026 national election.

They highlighted the killing of Sharif Osman Hadi, an aspiring independent candidate from Dhaka-8, and reports that Dipu Chandra Das was beaten to death and burned in Mymensingh following allegations of "derogatory remarks" about religion.

Journalists and staff were trapped inside the burning premises, facing grave risks to their lives.

The temporary suspension of both print and online editions marked an "unprecedented disruption" to Bangladesh's media landscape.

Significantly, the statement criticised the state's failure

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Electric three-wheelers must be regulated

Say speakers at CPD event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the large number of electric three-wheelers (E3Ws) already plying the streets and providing livelihoods for thousands, experts and officials yesterday said the only option is to integrate them into the public transport



system under strict regulations.

They were speaking at a dissemination programme of the study titled "Integrating Electric Three Wheelers into the Urban Transport Network: Challenges and Way Forward", organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue at its Dhanmondi office.

CPD Research Director Khondaker Golam Moazzem and Programme Associate Khalid Mahmud carried out the study.

Citing media reports, Mahmud, who also presented their study findings, said that 40 to 60 lakh E3Ws are in operation across the country and nearly 90 percent of them are locally made.

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NCP labour wing leader shot in Khulna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The divisional convener of Sramik Shakti, the labour wing of the National Citizen Party, was shot in Khulna yesterday.

Mohammad Motaleb Sikder, 42, is undergoing treatment at Khulna Medical College Hospital and is currently out of danger. Doctors confirmed that the bullet did not penetrate his head.

According to police and NCP leaders, Motaleb was shot around 11:30am at a rented house near Al-Aqsa Mosque under Sonadanga Police Station in the city.

Locals said the house was rented in November by a man and a woman, who introduced themselves as husband and wife. They said Sikder regularly visited the house.

Confirming the incident, Sonadanga Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Rafiqul Islam told The Daily Star that a bullet grazed Sikder's skull, leaving him injured.

Khulna Metropolitan Police Deputy Commissioner (South) Md Tajul Islam said police found the house locked when they arrived

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An investigator works at the scene where Lieutenant General Fanil Sarvarov, head of the Russian General Staff's army operational training directorate, was reportedly killed in a car bomb in Moscow, Russia, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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