DHAKA THURSDAY OCTOBER 22, 2026



"Not even a tiny bit of enriched nuclear material will leave Iran. Such materials constitute a major asset for the Iranian people."

Iran's security chief **MOHSEN REZAEI**

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Ctg building itself into climate danger

ADB report shows construction in port city growing fastest in flood-prone zones

Flood-zone development grew 16.2% in 2016-25; 9.7% on safer land

1.75cr people could face coastal flooding annually by 2100

Households already spend 17.25% of income on flood protection

KEERO ADHNAN AHMED

Nearly a quarter of Chattogram's built-up area lies in places that would go underwater during a severe coastal flood, yet these are the areas where the city is expanding fastest, according to an Asian Development Bank (ADB) study.

The port city's total settlement extent or built-up areas, meaning land covered by buildings, roads and other infrastructure, increased from 66.1 square kilometres in 2016 to 73.5 square kilometres in 2025, the ADB said in its Asia-Pacific Climate Report 2026, released yesterday.

Between 2016 and 2025, flood-prone settlement grew by 16.2 percent, compared with 9.7 percent of built-up areas on safer land, and 11.2 percent across the city as a whole.

Growth was fastest in areas where severe flooding could leave 0.5 to 1.5 metres of water, at 16.6 percent. In areas where floodwaters could exceed 1.5 metres, settlement grew by 16.1 percent.

Floodwater deeper than 0.5 metres can damage buildings and disrupt water supplies, sanitation and electricity, the report said.

"Chittagong stands out as the clearest warning, with growth concentrated in the deepest zones," it said.

The report, which ADB describes as the first assessment of coastal risks across all 30 of its

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Thousands of devotees gather at Patenga beach in the port city yesterday to bid farewell to Goddess Durga on the final day (Dashami) of Durga Puja, the largest religious festival of the country's Hindu community. The immersion of the goddess's idol symbolises Durga's return to her celestial abode.

PHOTO: **RAJIB RAIHAN**

NOWHERE TO PLAY

41 Dhaka wards have no parks or playgrounds; experts warn of growing risks to children's physical, mental health

TAMANNA YESMIN MARIA

One Monday afternoon, 10-year-old Khalid Abdullah (not his real name), a Grade-3 student, gazed sadly at the football lying in the corner of his room. He had returned to his Shewrapara home from school an hour earlier.

He picked up the football his father had bought him months ago and stepped onto the apartment balcony. Looking down at the street below, he saw cars, buses and rickshaws inching through traffic. There was no open field nearby, no children chasing a football and no place where he could join a game.

Sensing his disappointment, his mother handed him a mobile phone so he could play video games instead.

The recent Detailed Area Plan (DAP) of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (RAJUK) shows that of the 129 wards in the city, at least 41 -- 10 under Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and 31 under Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) -- do not have any playgrounds or parks.

Khalid's story is far from unique. As neighbourhoods become increasingly crowded, playgrounds vanish and children's schedules fill up with classes and coaching, many in Dhaka city are growing up without a regular place to run and play.

Health experts say the shortage of recreational spaces is affecting more than just children's leisure time -- it is undermining their physical health, mental well-being and their ability to develop social skills.

This is reflected in a 2024 review published in the International

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ROAD SAFETY DAY

Nearly 8,000 children killed in less than 7yrs

At least 2,513 died travelling to or from school

SHAMIMA RITA

As six-year-old Tanvir Islam Arian waited by the roadside to return home after school on April 19, a covered van struck him near Keowa Purba Khondo Government Primary School in Dhaka.

The Grade 2 student was rushed to hospital, but doctors declared him dead on arrival.

Arian never made it home.

For his family, an ordinary school day ended in an unimaginable loss. For thousands of other families across Bangladesh, the tragedy is painfully familiar.

Between January 2020 and September 2026, at least 7,963 children were killed in road crashes across Bangladesh, accounting for nearly 18 percent of the 44,816 fatalities recorded during the period, according to the Road Safety Foundation (RSF).

Of them, 2,513 (31.56 percent) died travelling to or from educational institutions, while another 12 percent were killed playing on roads near their homes. Another 2,812 (35.31 percent)

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Fatalities jump 26% since 2018

SHAMIMA RITA

In the eight years after the student-led road safety movement, road fatalities have increased by 26.2 percent, raising questions about the effectiveness of measures introduced to make roads safer.

68,285 people were killed in 50,936 road crashes between January 2018 and June 2026, according to Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity.

According to Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity, 9,111 people were killed in 6,729 road crashes in 2025, compared with 7,221 deaths in 5,514 crashes in 2018. Number of crashes increased by 1,215, or 22 percent, over the eight years.

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Subsidy cut deals blow to theatre troupes

Mahila Samity auditorium rent more than doubles to Tk 11,500 per shift

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

The withdrawal of government subsidies has more than doubled the cost of staging plays at the Dr Nilima Ibrahim Auditorium of the Bangladesh Mahila Samity, putting theatre troupes under financial strain and discouraging performances at the venue.

Since January, troupes have had to pay Tk 11,500 per shift, up from Tk 5,000, after the Ministry of Cultural Affairs discontinued a Tk 6,500 subsidy.

Eminent theatre personality Ramendu Majumdar said the auditorium authorities had initially set the rent at Tk 11,500 when the venue reopened.

"We spoke with the cultural minister at the time and asked, 'How can we afford such

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'DRUG PARTIES' AT COP'S HOUSE

Under police's nose, for nearly a year

Seizure list raises questions over limited drug recovery

Between 20 and 22 parties were being organised at the property every month since 2025, with participants joining through online registration, according to the DB.

SHAHEEN MOLLAH *and* **TOUSIF KAIUM**

Alleged drug consumption, illegal DJ parties and other antisocial activities at a senior police officer's house in Purbachal went unchecked for nearly a year until a raid early Tuesday, although a six-storey police outpost stood just 30 yards away.

The house stood in a secluded part of the neighbourhood, but the gatherings were hardly discreet.

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