

Medical workers and a rescuer evacuate a resident from an apartment building damaged in a Russian airstrike in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

UP poll ambition

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According to police sources, two helmeted men arrived in Swalpabahirdia village on a motorcycle from the Faqirhat side of Bagerhat around 10:30pm on Thursday.

They stopped beside a shop where Jakir was sitting. One of them entered the shop and shot him in the head before fleeing towards Faqirhat with his accomplice.

Locals rushed Jakir to Rupsha Upazila Health Complex, where he died while undergoing treatment.

The SP said Jakir's body was at Khulna Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Meanwhile, authorities have decided to launch special joint forces operations to curb terrorism and extortion in Khulna amid a series of killings.

The measures include setting up checkpoints on highways and major roads, deploying 200 Ansar members, increasing patrols and intelligence activities, and intensifying a crackdown on unregistered motorcycles.

The decisions were taken at a special meeting of senior law enforcement officials at Khulna Circuit House on Thursday night. Another meeting on the district's law and order situation was held at the same venue earlier that evening.

Between October 22 and November 12, Khulna witnessed 13 shooting incidents that left six people dead.

Three other murders were reported during the same period, with two victims killed using sharp weapons and another beaten to death.

Of the nine murders, five occurred in Khulna city and four in Rupsha and Dumuria upazilas.

A total of 79 murders were recorded in Khulna between January 1 and November 12 this year, including 39 in the city and 40 in the district.

No respite

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He also called for stronger measures against Culex mosquitoes, whose population is likely to increase in the coming days.

HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, said although dengue cases had declined slightly, hospitals were still receiving a considerable number of critically ill patients.

Ahsan warned that delays in transportation, emergency assessment and hospital admission could cause irreversible organ damage and increase the risk of death among patients with dengue shock.

Early treatment, however, significantly improves their chances of recovery, he said.

He also reported severe complications among dengue patients this year, including liver, kidney, respiratory and heart failure, as well as myocarditis, or inflammation of the heart muscle.

Such complications appeared more common than in previous years, although further studies were needed to determine the reasons, he added.

Ahsan said the circulation of dengue virus serotype 3 (DENV-3) could be a contributing factor, as variations within a serotype may influence disease severity.

He urged high-risk patients, including those with heart, lung, liver or kidney diseases, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or obesity, to seek hospital admission promptly after diagnosis.

"Early hospitalisation is our main recommendation, particularly for high-risk patients. If we can reduce delays in seeking care and ensure appropriate treatment and stabilisation, we may be able to reduce the number of deaths and severe outcomes," Nazmul said.

Eatery vandalised

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the trouble began when a young man occupied a newly vacated seat despite a family waiting for it.

An argument ensued, prompting an employee to intervene. The youth became angry and left, Shafin said.

"A little later, he returned with several others. They first beat up our staff member Khalil outside the restaurant and then began vandalising the premises," he said.

A video circulating on social media shows a group of young men entering the restaurant and throwing chairs, tables and other furniture around.

The restaurant remained closed following the attack.

Ruhul Kabir Khan, deputy commissioner of the Gulshan division, said police had video footage and were working to identify those involved.

Khelafat Majlis

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The issue has yet to be discussed formally within the alliance but could be raised at a meeting later this month.

"If Jamaat is unwilling to contest together, we cannot force them. We may then consider a separate electoral alliance, excluding Jamaat. Besides other parties in the 11-party alliance, there are many Islamic parties outside it, as well as the NCP and other parties. We can explore how to perform well by bringing them together," Jalaluddin said.

Hamidur Rahman Azad, coordinator of the 11-party alliance and assistant secretary general of Jamaat-e-Islami, told The Daily Star that local government elections differed from national polls and did not involve party symbols or national political considerations.

He said a centralised understanding was unnecessary, although local-level discussions could take place after the election schedule was announced and candidates' positions became clear.

Decisions could then be made based on candidates' popularity and prospects of winning, he added.

Azad said separate participation would not affect the alliance, as parties had contested elections independently in the past while maintaining their political cooperation.

Khelafat Ameer Mamunul Haque, however, expressed concern over the issue at a press conference at the party's central office in Purana Paltan, Dhaka, on November 7.

He warned that separate candidates could weaken the 11-party alliance and create divisions at the grassroots.

Mamunul said electoral understanding was essential to preserving unity in the movement and that Jamaat, as the alliance's largest party, should take the lead. He also said Jamaat would have to bear responsibility if no understanding was reached.

At the press conference, he announced his party's mayoral candidates for Dhaka North and South city corporations while keeping the door open for talks with like-minded parties.

Meanwhile, seven Qawmi-based Islamic parties discussed joint participation in local polls at a liaison committee meeting at Al-Jamiatul Islamia Makhzanul Uloom Madrasa in Khilgaon, Dhaka, on October 22.

The parties are Islami Andolan Bangladesh, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Bangladesh, Khelafat Majlis, Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, Bangladesh Khelafat Andolon, Islami Oikya Jote and Bangladesh Nezam-e-Islam Party.

They discussed joint activities under the banner of "Like-minded Islamic Parties" and a common position on local polls.

According to meeting sources, Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh leaders urged the Qawmi-based parties in the Jamaat-led alliance to leave it. At least three Qawmi-based parties, including Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, are actively involved in the 11-party alliance.

However, no decision has been made on whether parties affiliated with other political alliances must leave those platforms to join the seven-party initiative.

The seven parties are scheduled to meet again on December 5 to discuss the proposed alliance's principles and working procedures.

A reading space lost to years of delay

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replacement remains incomplete, despite work beginning in 2022.

As such, the library, once a vibrant space for readers, has largely been devoid of activity for a prolonged period.

The modernisation project was originally scheduled for completion in December 2024. However, it could not be finished on time, as physical work began only in September 2022.

The project is around 66 percent complete, and now it is expected to be finished by June 2028.

Until then, the library is operating from the 12th floor of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) building in Ramna. Limited space has reduced both the number of books available to readers and the number of visitors.

Manish Chakma, director general of the Department of Public Libraries, said around 35 to 40 people now visit the temporary library each day, although the number rises to about 150 during special programmes.

The facility can accommodate around 100 readers and has a separate corner for people with disabilities.

Of the library's roughly 3,50,000 books, only about 70,000 are currently on display. The rest are kept in cartons or stored at the IEB building due to space constraints.

The foundation of the Sufia Kamal National Public Library was laid in 1954 at the present site of Dhaka University Central Library. It was later relocated to its current location in Shahbagh in 1978. The old premises were particularly renowned for hosting cultural programmes.

Sadik Ishmam, a former DU student, said, "Back in the day, we used to attend book fairs and film festivals at the Shawkat Osman Auditorium at the public library. Those events used to be so lively."

The modernisation project was originally scheduled for completion in December 2024. However, it could not be finished on time, as physical work began only in September 2022.

The initial budget for the new library building project was Tk 561 crore 30 lakh. A revised proposal has since been submitted, increasing the budget by Tk 27 crore.

During a recent visit to the old Sufia Kamal National Public Library site in Shahbagh, these correspondents found construction work ongoing, although activity at the site appeared limited.

A few construction workers were seen at the site. When asked, workers said work was progressing, but not at a fast pace, and that the number of workers was limited.

Several shopkeepers in front of the construction site also said they had witnessed almost no progress over a long period. Asked about the progress, Manish said work on the steel structure, lifts, escalators and air-conditioning system was underway.

He said the temporary library at the IEB building had also been proposed under the project's second component, but the proposal had not yet received approval.

Once completed, the new library is expected to accommodate around 1,500 readers at a time, while about 5,000 people will be able to use the premises simultaneously, he said.

Manish also said the planned facility would have separate science, reference and general reading rooms, an e-library, and facilities for children, adolescents and people with disabilities.

It will also include three auditoriums and three seminar halls, exhibition and book-fair spaces, a public plaza, cafeteria, daycare centre, indoor games facilities, a coffee shop, gymnasium, prayer rooms and other facilities, he added.

7 in 10 with diabetes

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of people with diabetes are unaware that they are suffering from the disease.

Among adults with diabetes, 67 percent of women and 72 percent of men were not aware that they had high blood glucose levels, according to the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS) 2022, conducted by the National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT) under the health ministry.

The corresponding figures were 59 percent and 61 percent, respectively, in 2017-18, indicating a rise in the proportion of people unaware of their condition.

This lack of awareness persists even as diabetes has spread rapidly across the country over the years, shows both the government and non-government data, increasing the disease burden and putting the healthcare system under strain.

Amid the situation, the country as well as the world is observing the World Diabetes Day today with the theme, "Early action on diabetes," highlighting the importance of earlier diagnosis, access to comprehensive care, and reducing diabetes stigma.

According to WHO, diabetes is a chronic disease that occurs either when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or when the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces.

Bangladesh does not have an exact figure of people living with diabetes, but various estimates indicate a huge burden of the disease in the country.

Bangladesh had around 1.39 crore adults aged 20-79 living with diabetes in 2024, according to the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) Diabetes Atlas-2025.

BDHS-2022 found 17 percent of women and 15 percent of men aged 18 and above had diabetes. The survey covered 30,018 households.

The figures were 10 percent and 11 percent respectively, according to the same survey conducted in 2017-18.

The rising figure is also reflected in data from the Diabetic Association of Bangladesh (BADAS).

According to the organisation, the number of registered diabetic patients increased from 30.61 lakh in 2014-15 to 69.37 lakh in 2024-25, a rise of 127 percent over the decade.

The association registered 3.83 lakh new patients in the 2024-25 fiscal year, its data show.

Talking to this correspondent, Prof Sharmin Jahan, chairman of Endocrinology and Metabolism Department of Bangladesh Medical University, said the rising prevalence of diabetes in the country is largely driven by sedentary lifestyles, unhealthy dietary habits, urbanisation, and genetic predisposition.

Diabetes risk is particularly high among South Asians, she said, adding that people with a family history of the disease are at greater risk, especially when they do not maintain a healthy lifestyle.

"Modern lifestyles have become increasingly sedentary. People do very little physical activity but consume high-calorie foods that they don't burn off. This leads to obesity and insulin resistance, increasing the risk of diabetes."

Urbanisation has further aggravated the situation as it reduces opportunities for physical activity through increased motorised transport and increasing dependence on electronic devices and labour-saving technologies, she said.

Unhealthy food habits and inadequate exercise are also contributing to the growing number of people developing diabetes at a younger age, she said, adding that the number of people with prediabetes is also rising.

This lack of awareness persists even as diabetes has spread rapidly over the years, shows both the government and non-government data, increasing the disease burden and putting the healthcare system under strain.

However, diabetes prevalence varies by place of residence, age, and socioeconomic status, shows data.

The prevalence of diabetes among urban women was 24 percent, compared with 14 percent among rural women, according to the BDHS 2022. Among men, the prevalence was 21 percent in urban areas and 13 percent in rural areas.

The wealth gap was also evident. In the highest wealth quintile, diabetes prevalence was 26 percent among women, compared with 11 percent among women in the lowest quintile. Among men, the rate was 25 percent in the highest quintile and 10 percent in the lowest.

Prof Sharmin said people in urban areas are generally more exposed to sedentary lifestyles, calorie-dense diets, electronic devices and stress, while rural residents traditionally engage in more physical labour, walk more, consume locally grown vegetables and maintain more active daily routines.

However, she warned that the gap between rural and urban populations is narrowing as urban lifestyles increasingly spread to villages.

"Rural people are also becoming more dependent on mobile phones, labour-saving technologies and motorised transport, reducing the habit of walking, and contributing to rising diabetes," she said.

While around 70 percent of people with diabetes are unaware of their condition, many who know also do not take medication regularly.

According to the BDHS-2022, only 6 percent of female patients and 5 percent of male patients reported being aware of their condition, taking medication, and having their blood glucose levels under control.

It also found that another 9 percent of both women and men had elevated blood glucose levels but were not taking any medication.

Regarding the lack of awareness, Prof Sharmin said early detection is crucial, as lifestyle changes can prevent or delay the onset of diabetes and its complications.

"If people with a family history of diabetes adopt healthy habits from an early age, including a balanced diet, regular exercise, adequate sleep, and stress management, they can significantly reduce their risk."

Lifestyle modifications alone can prevent around 58-60 percent of diabetes cases among people at risk, the physician said, citing study reports.

"However, many patients don't take diabetes seriously even after diagnosis and often neglect treatment until complications become severe," she said.

Prof Prabath Chandra Biswas, director general of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), said every upazila health complex has a non-communicable disease (NCD) corner where medicines for diabetes and hypertension are provided, along with routine checkups.

"We are planning to strengthen the NCD corners as the number of diabetic patients is rising."

Asked about reported shortages of diabetes medicines at the NCD corners, he said the authorities had asked hospitals to use their own funds to ensure an uninterrupted supply of medicines at the corners.

Speaking to this correspondent, Health Minister Sardar Md Sakhawat Husain said the government had taken initiatives to expand healthcare services to cope up with the growing number of patients.

The government would take steps to raise public awareness about the disease, he added.

COP31 turns

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European leaders, meanwhile, lined up behind a proposal to expand global electrification, developing countries asked for more finance from rich ones, and fossil fuel producers said oil, gas, and coal should continue to be used.

"We reaffirm our sovereign right to strengthen our energy and oil industry as a driver of our national development," Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodriguez told the conference, after UN leaders had made the case for bringing to an end the age of fossil fuel.

Apart from trying to accommodate incompatible national positions aired on Wednesday and Thursday, conference host Turkey and negotiations lead Australia also have the challenge of trying to make progress when wars and inflation have pushed climate concerns down the political agenda.

"It's my job to steer consensus, not to bang tables and demand any particular action, but to steer consensus to the strongest, most ambitious possible outcome within the constraints of that consensus-driven process," Chris Bowen, Australia's COP31 president of negotiations, told Reuters.

Asked what a good deal might look like, he said: "I have many more hours of consultations with partners to do."

Climate activists say short-term political concerns should not get in the way of addressing an issue that will get more pressing if ignored. China, however, has decided against hosting the UN's annual climate talks in 2028 after having considered the possibility in recent months, sources familiar with the issue told AFP yesterday.

A UN report last month found the world was already on course to break through the 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) warming limit that countries had agreed to pursue under the 2015 Paris Agreement to prevent the worst effects of climate change.

Developing countries reiterated requests that they have made during many years of UN talks for rich countries to provide more finance to help them shift to cleaner energy, adapt to a warming world, and repair climate-driven destruction.

Fernanda de Carvalho, the head of climate policy for the World Wildlife Fund environmental group, said she found the leaders' speeches underwhelming, especially as COP31 is the first UN conference since scientists have publicly said the world is set to breach the 1.5C threshold.

"It is worrying that the climate issue is not as high on the global political agenda as it needs to be," she said.

Microsoft battles major outage

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support services were impacted.

The outage also disrupted fund management at Taiwanese securities firms, life insurers, and investment trust companies. One of the companies went as far as cancelling a bond repurchase transaction, a source familiar with the situation told Reuters.

Another Taiwanese financial company resorted to using fax to confirm trades, a second source said.

In the US, electric truck maker Workhorse Group rescheduled its results on Thursday to November 16, while Switzerland's Richemont briefly delayed its first half results announcement yesterday.

In Australia, where the spy agency and federal police were among organizations caught in the outage, Cyber Security Minister Tony Burke said Microsoft does not suspect a cyber attack.

"The impact that they are dealing with ... is very much on email systems," the minister added.

Veggie prices rise

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100 in local markets.

Kohinoor Begum, a shopper at Karwan Bazar, expressed frustration over the increases.

"Prices are supposed to drop now, why are they rising?" she asked.

Mohammad Alam, a poultry vendor at Karwan Bazar, said chicken prices had fallen by Tk 10 per kg over the week.

Broiler chicken was selling at Tk 170-175 per kg, hybrid Sonali at Tk 260-280 and regular Sonali at Tk 300-320. Fish prices remained unchanged despite improved supply, said trader Monir Hossain at Karwan Bazar.

Rohu was selling at Tk 300-320 per kg, katla at Tk 280-300 and shrimp at Tk 600-1,000. Farm brown eggs were selling at Tk 120-140 a dozen, beef at Tk 780-850 per kg and mutton at Tk 1,250-1,300 per kg, unchanged from last week.

Give wage board time, return to work

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patient and act professionally in their workplaces.

He also urged the workers not to engage in any activities or instigation that may affect the functions of the wage board.

In the written speech on behalf of the alliances, he urged the government to not harass or arrest any more workers for participating in the demonstrations as well as to release those detained earlier.

Hiking the wages is not the solution as the prices of essential commodities and house rent, which take up the major portion of workers' income, have gone up, he said, while calling upon the government to enforce rent control.

"We want stability and the garment sector to thrive alongside workers' rights," said Ahsan Habib Bulbul, joint coordinator of Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad, while calling for resumption of production in factories.

He also demanded a good grievance management in the factories so that the workers need not to go for unrest.

In few areas, the unrest is still going on, said Montu Ghosh, president of Bangladesh Garment Workers Trade Union Centre.

He also urged the workers not to create any scope for factory owners to file cases against them and eventually get arrested by the police.

"Some workers are throwing brick chips towards factories -- we do not want it," he said.

The workers' representative at the wage board has already proposed Tk 32,000 and the discussion on the amount is going on, said Nazma Akter, president of Sommilito Garments Sramik Federation.

The wage board has already held two meetings and the next meeting is scheduled to be held on November 16.

"So, the workers need to be patient and act responsibly now."

Urging the workers to go back to their workplaces, Nazma also said most of the workers are young and if the unrest continues, many of them may lose jobs.

"This is the peak season for delivering work orders from the international clothing retailers and brands, and we have to keep that in mind."

The union leaders are still working out how many workers have been arrested and how many police cases have been filed against workers for the unrest that has gone on for three weeks now, she added.

The minimum salary for the garment workers is reviewed every three years instead of five years previously, said Taslima Akhter, president of the Bangladesh Garment Sramik Samhati.

She also urged the government to release the arrested workers.

"We are hopeful that the wage board will act promptly," she said, while calling for resumption of production in factories as the wage board should be given time for fixing the salary.

Amirul Haque Amin, president of the National Garment Workers Federation, demanded compensation for the worker's death during the unrest.