

## Take steps for electrical safety at all mosques

Religious affairs ministry directs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Religious Affairs ministry yesterday instructed all mosque committees across the country, especially of those that have air-conditioners installed, to take necessary measures to examine and repair electrical connections to avoid accidents.

The ministry asked committees to carry out the activities under supervision of divisional or district offices of Islamic Foundation, and with assistance of local administration, including public works and local government engineering department.

The directions were given the day after a deadly blast occurred at a mosque in Narayanganj, killing 24 so far and injuring many others critically.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

**THE ADDED BURDEN...** A rickshaw van puller piles up as many fabric sheets as he can, pulling with all his might to transport these to the capital's Bangabazar. With the pandemic taking away their livelihoods for several months, many daily earners have fallen into debt trying to keep their nose above the water, and now that the economy has opened, must push a little extra hard to pay those off. The photo was taken yesterday.

## No one given the power to snatch one's freedom of expression

Says NHRC chief

CITY DESK

No one has been given the power to take away one's freedom of expression, chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Nasima Begum said yesterday.

She was speaking at a joint virtual meeting hosted by the NHRC and international human rights organisation Article 19, which works to protect freedom of expression, said a press release from NHRC.

Nasima Begum was the chief guest in this event while Kazi Reazul Hoque, former chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission, was the guest of honour. The programme was chaired by Faruq Faisal, regional director of Article 19 South Asia.

In her speech, Nasima Begum further said, "The right to express one's opinion is a universal right. But freedom of expression does not mean hurting others. In this case, every citizen is expected to behave responsibly."

She also emphasised the need for public-private initiatives for protection and promotion of human rights in the country. "He who commits corruption or conceals information does so in violation of the rights of others." Therefore, the National Human Rights Commission has taken initiative to work in coordination with the Information Commission and the Anti-Corruption Commission.

Kazi Reazul Hoque said, "Freedom of expression is a fundamental right. It is a constitutional duty to protect this

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## 4 armed guards for every UNO in Rajshahi div

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Every upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Rajshahi division started getting at least four armed members of Ansar and Village Defence Party for their personal safety and security at their official residence from yesterday.

Shah Ahmed Fazle Rabbi, director of Rajshahi Range Ansar and VDP, confirmed it to The Daily Star, saying that the number of security personnel is likely to increase in coming days.

Deploying at least 268 armed members of Ansar and VDP in all 67 upazilas began on Friday, he said, adding that the process completed yesterday.

The Ansar members would primarily guard residences of the UNOs and they would follow the UNOs wherever they go, he said.

The decision was taken following a home

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## AIR CONDITIONER EXPLOSION WHY IT HAPPENS AND HOW TO BE SAFE FROM IT

EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

Air conditioners are not made to explode. Yet, on Feb 10, 2020, three people were injured in an air conditioner explosion in Old Dhaka's Islampur area. April 29 saw three people receiving burn injuries from an incident in a barbershop in Paltan. Earlier on August 5, 2019, four of a family from the city's Kathalbagan area sustained burn injuries as their home AC unit reportedly exploded. Meanwhile, death toll from Friday's explosion at a Narayanganj mosque reached 24 as of yesterday. There was a load-shedding in the area and it is suspected that air conditioners exploded on the ground floor of the mosque as soon as electricity returned. Fire officials now suspect accumulated gas from a leaked pipe line that runs beneath the mosque caused a fire that might have triggered the explosion. What is going on? Investigations are under way. ACs rarely just explode. But they can overheat and catch on fire. That fire could lead to an explosion of the pressurised gas.



### HOW DO THEY OVERHEAT?

- 1. DIRT:** Dust, grime and mineral scales build up on the condenser coil which is the thing inside the AC that looks like a densely packed grill made of tubes and aluminium fins. Dirt reduces its ability to transfer heat outside. As a result, your AC will run constantly without shutting off.
- 2. FAULTY WIRING:** Electrical fires result from bad wiring and sub-standard plugs, sockets and circuit breakers.
- 3. POWER SURGE:** What we refer to as "voltage up-down" can cause your home electronics to break down. This

is a common issue with the electricity supply in the country. The first sign is usually flickering lights followed by a rise of drop in voltage.

- 4. USING THE WRONG GAS:** ACs require particular types of gas depending on when they were made. The most popular gas (refrigerant) used to be Freon which is non-flammable but

has a higher rating for contributing to global warming. Newer units (mostly post 2019) are made to use R410a which is called Puron and it is also non-flammable. Using the wrong gas for a system could lead to overheating and fires.

### HOW TO TELL IF THE AC IS FAULTY?

- 1.** AC compressor never stops running. This will also happen if you have an open door or window or the room is far bigger than the ACs cooling capacity.
- 2.** Any unusual noises such as squealing or grinding could signal worn bearings.

### HOW TO MAINTAIN AN AC?

- 1.** Keep the AC unit's air filter clean so it does not have to work extra hard to pull air. Dhaka's air is especially dusty.
- 2.** A window unit should lean a little outside so that condensation water drains out quickly.
- 3.** Never use an extension cord for an air conditioner because these cannot take the electrical load. An AC should be connected to its circuit.

### HOW TO SAFEGUARD FROM FIRES?

- 1.** Unplug during storms
- 2.** Inspect wiring to make sure everything is in order.
- 3.** Include surge protectors to prevent excess voltage from causing

fires. Modern building should theoretically be equipped with surge protectors that safely dispel excess current through a proper ground connection.



- 4.** Connect via circuit breakers so that they shut off if there is a spike protecting your electronic devices.
- 5.** If you repair an older AC unit, make sure the correct gas is being used to refill.

Simply put, we can avoid such incidents if we set up an AC wiring properly, add excess-voltage safeguards and maintain it regularly.

## TACKLING PANDEMICS

### Experts urge mainstreaming of public health for overall dev

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Public health needs to be mainstreamed in the country's health system to improve the overall health situation and tackle pandemics like Covid-19, experts have said.

They said the country's health system is mostly dependent on the curative side handled by the clinicians, but if a population's health is to be improved, it should equally include public health that includes preventive measures and healthcare management.

The observations came at a webinar titled "Mainstreaming Public Health in the National Health System of Bangladesh", organised by Public Health Foundation Bangladesh (PHFB) Saturday night.

Public health is the science of protecting and improving the health of people and communities. This work is achieved by promoting healthy lifestyles, researching disease and injury prevention, and detecting, preventing and responding to infectious diseases. In a nutshell, public health is concerned with protecting the

health of the entire population. The population can be as small as a local neighbourhood, or as big as the entire country or an entire region of the world, according to experts.

In his keynote, PHFB Executive Director Dr Taufique Joarder said Bangladesh has been caught off-guard by the Covid-19 pandemic, mainly due to its historical negligence towards a public health system and a pertinent public health education.

While the pandemic cried need for a central as well as a local level public health response by trained public health professionals, this could not be ensured due to the non-existence of anything as such, he said.

A recent survey revealed, only five percent of the UH&FPOs (Upazila health and family planning officers) hold a degree in public health said Dr Taufique Joarder.

On top of it, at the central level, the DGHS is principally managed by the clinicians at the expense of public health

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## Road, auditorium named after Abul Mansur Ahmad

STAR REPORT

A road in Mymensingh's Trishal upazila and an auditorium of the municipality have been named after renowned politician and litterateur Abul Mansur Ahmad.

Authorities of Trishal upazila parishad and municipality declared to commemorate Ahmad's 122nd birth anniversary fittingly.

The declaration came following a memorial discussion on Friday, organised by Sonjibon Jubo Songtha, a social welfare organisation of the upazila, at the conference room of Trishal upazila parishad.

Speakers have called upon the new generation to devote themselves to social service, literature and journalism, following Ahmad's footsteps.

Born in the district's Dhanikhola village on September 3, 1898, Ahmad was one of the best satirical writers of Bengali literature. He also had illustrious careers in journalism and politics.

Trishal Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Mustafizur Rahman presided over Friday's event, while Trishal Upazila Parishad Chairperson Alhaj Abdul Motin Sarker was chief guest and Trishal Municipality Mayor ABM Anisuzzaman special guest.

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PHOTO: COLLECTED

**A sculpture of national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam stands in front of shooting floor eight, hidden behind beige net curtains, a reminder of BFDC's bygone glory days.**

## Lights, camera ... silence

BFDC stands lifeless as film industry in slumber

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

An eerie silence has engulfed Bangladesh Film Development Corporation's (BFDC) premises. Gone are the days of all-day shoots, dubbing work, and the gathering of enthusiastic crowds in front of the main gate. For better or for worse, the coronavirus pandemic has changed the country's premier film hub.

Back in regular times, it was normal for people to gather around BFDC's front gate, regardless of whether there's any shoot or not. Fanfare would be at fever pitch anytime a silver-screen star would drive in. The fans would often visit from afar, even from outside the city. On their lucky days, they would be allowed inside and roam among the people of their fantasies.

All of that was missing when this correspondent visited BFDC recently. Instead of the usual scenes, 50-odd workers were seen renovating the premises.

The much beloved shooting floors three and four have already been dismantled. Although the works were started long before the lockdown, the emptiness of the legendary floors hits harder with nothing else going on around.

The shooting floors are a sea of memories for BFDC long-timers. "I remember we pulled all-nighters working on 'Rajmahal' in those two shooting floors," said veteran actress Rozina. "Those places are gone now. It's saddening to hear this news."

Insider sources said a 15-storey FDC Complex will be erected in their place. The complex is set to have a theatre hall, offices of film production houses, shooting spots, cineplex, bank and insurance offices, food courts and more. The expected budget is somewhere around Tk 320 crores.

KM Ayub Ali, director of FDC's Technical and Engineering department, said, "The project was approved by the Executive

Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) back in October 3, 2018."

A sculpture of national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam stood beside these floors. It was done by sculptor Shamim Shikder back in 1984. After the floors were dismantled, the statue was shifted to the frontside of shooting floor eight, where it now stands wrapped in white clothes. To add to the ignominy, fragments of the sculpture got chipped off while it was being moved.

A film director, on condition of anonymity, fumed, "We are so unaware that we couldn't even maintain proper precautions while moving the national poet's sculpture."

Beyond films, BFDC is also used for shooting television programmes. Due to the pandemic, that has been halted too.

But there's one floor where shooting is still going on -- the floor named after the late actor Jasim.

The film 'Tungipara'r Miya Bhai' is being shot here. It's produced by Shapla Media on the occasion of Mujib Barsho.

Inside the Jasim floor, a set for an old, pre-liberation era house has been constructed. "It's modeled after Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy's house," director Shamim Ahmed Rony told this correspondent. A little while later, actor Majnun Mijan walked in, dressed up as Shaheed Suhrawardy.

The office of Bangladesh Film Artists' Association lies near Jasim floor. Although it's usually open all day, it was closed on the day of this correspondent's visit. Contacted, film actor Zayed Khan, also general secretary of the association, said, "I come to the office every day after lunch. We keep the space open only to work for the welfare of film artists."

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**Everyday, around 2,000-5,000 vehicles pass through this strip at Sylhet's Circuit House area's Kali Ghaat road. In spite of its importance, the road has remained in an awful state for a long time. To add to this, a few hundred trucks are constantly parked on it, even though it's under a VIP zone. The same can be said about many other roads at the city's Bandar Bazar, Surma Point and more. Starved of repair works, the streets have become a cause for concern for commuters, even moreso during rainy seasons, when the suffering increases manifold. This photo was taken yesterday.**

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

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