

8TH FIVE-YEAR PLAN Road safety to get top priority

Says Obaidul Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday proposed to incorporate road safety issues in the upcoming 8th five-year plan, as a priority matter.

"Because, road accident has turned out to be a major concern and ensuring safe road is a major challenge," Quader said while taking part in a sector-wise discussion on the 8th five-year plan through video conference.

He said road sector has witnessed huge development as around 450 kilometres roads have been expanded into four lanes in last 12 years and expansion of another 450km roads into four lanes is going on.

"But, we could not bring discipline on the road fully," Quader, also the general secretary of ruling Awami League, said, adding,

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

ONE MORE REASON TO WEAR A MASK... A combination of dry weather and high levels of dust coming from the metro rail's construction leaves the capital's Secretariat Road barely visible. If this is the scenario now, the approaching winter will most certainly make the situation worse, if steps are not taken to curb air pollution.

DAMAGING DHAKA-MAWA-BHANGA EXPRESSWAY

'Chinese contractor will compensate for it'

Says Padma Bridge Rail Link Project authority;
RHD says the amount would be over Tk 50cr

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

China Railway Group Limited, also known as CREC, the contractor of the Padma Bridge Rail Link Project (PBRLP), will have to pay for damaging the newly-built Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga expressway by operating overloaded trucks with construction materials.

Roads and Highways Department (RHD), who is the custodian of the first-ever expressway of the country, said the amount would be more than Tk 50 crore while PBRLP authorities said they were yet to ascertain it.

"Our contractor will pay the money as the damage of the road was caused by them," Project Director of PBRLP Golam Fakhruddin Ahmed Chowdhury told The Daily Star on Tuesday.

In July, RHD and CREC were at loggerheads over the use of the expressway for transporting construction materials.

RHD officials said the contractor and sub-contractors are damaging the expressway by operating heavy-loaded

trucks to transport materials for the project. They sought around Tk 50 crore from the project authorities in compensation.

On the other hand, a CREC statement on July 9 said the contractor was facing obstacles in carrying on project work as the road authorities had gradually been closing the passages to the main road since June 11.

"Hence, the PBRLP project is currently facing suspension and heavy financial loss," reads the CREC statement.

Amid this situation, officials of RHD, PBRLP, road transport and bridges ministry, and railways ministry held several meetings to solve the problem.

As per the "common understanding" reached at a meeting of ministries and agencies concerned some two weeks ago, the RHD would receive Tk 54 crore in compensation for damaging the expressway, said Sabuj Uddin Khan, additional chief engineer (Dhaka zone) of RHD.

As per meeting decision, project authorities would be allowed to operate two-axle (six-wheel) trucks on the expressway.

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HSC-pass 'doctor' prescribing surgery!

Pvt hospital owners among six
jailed for medical malpractice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abul Hossain, owner and managing director of Crescent Hospital in the capital's Mohammadpur, like any doctor, has a private room inside the hospital building, with an X-ray viewing box right next to his seat.

There is only one issue. Abul is not a doctor. He does not have a medical degree; the only qualification he can show is his Higher Secondary Certificate. Despite this, he used to prescribe surgery for orthopaedic patients, posing as a professor of surgery.

A mobile court of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) during a drive at the hospital early yesterday found out about Abul's malpractice and sentenced him to one year's imprisonment.

Law enforcers were tipped off by a physician. "A doctor, who was on call at the hospital, wrote to us that non-physicians keeping x-ray viewers in their rooms and prescribing for operation is an offence," Rab Executive Magistrate Palash Kumar Basu, who led the drive, told The Daily Star.

Three private hospitals at Mohammadpur -- Makkah-Madina General Hospital, Nurjahan Orthopaedic Hospital and Crescent Hospital -- were raided.

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Give back our dorms

JnU students form human
chain with decade-old demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jagannath University students yesterday formed a human chain to press home a decade-old demand of reclaiming their dormitories from illegal occupants.

Some 12 dormitories of the university are currently occupied by different groups, the students alleged, including influential figures such as local lawmaker Haji Salim.

"Tibet Hall is currently occupied by Haji Salim, and a large shopping mall called Gulshanara City has been built in its place," said Mahmud Rasel Mishu, joint secretary of Chatra Odhikar Parishad and a student of the university.

"Our seniors have seen the sign of Tibet Hall hanging on that spot till 2011," alleged Mishu.

"University authorities tell us that they do not have the paperwork needed to reclaim the dormitories, but we know that they can challenge the occupation of at least six dormitories," said Tausif Mahmud, a protester and physics undergraduate student at the university.

This newspaper has previously reported that in 2007, JnU hired an audit firm

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62pc males believe women 'deserve to be beaten at times'

Reveals nationwide survey by Brac

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A nationwide survey has found evidence of implicit or explicit support for domestic violence against women. The all-male survey, titled "Male Youth and Their Sexual and Reproductive health and Rights (SRHR) in Bangladesh", found that 63 percent men agreed to the fact that "A man can hit his wife if she does not have sex with him", while 62 percent believe that "There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten."

The findings were shared at a webinar yesterday organised by Brac James P Grant School of Public Health.

The study was conducted through systematic random sampling from 81 urban and 289 rural clusters across 64 districts, where 11,102 male respondents aged between 15 and 24 participated.

The study also found that 30 percent young males in Bangladesh find a female smoker or drinker more readily agreeable to sexual advances.

Of the participating males, 27 percent said they had not heard the term 'family planning', while only six percent ever consulted a doctor, nurse, or health professional

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'DEROGATORY' COMMENTS ON RELIGION Suspended JnU student 'missing' for 4 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jagannath University (JnU) student Tithy Sarker, who was suspended from the university for making "derogatory" comments about religion on social media, has been missing since October 25, alleged her family members.

They said on Sunday morning Tithy went out from her Pallabi home to go to Pallabi Police Station. She has been traceless ever since, they added.

"On October 24 night, Sub-inspector Shuvo of Pallabi Police Station came to our house and told me that Tithy is supposed to go to the police station tomorrow (October 25)," said Srity Rani Sarker, elder sister of Tithy.

"She left home around 8:30am to reach the nearby 'trawler ghat'. She was planning to go to the police station from there," Seba Dashi, Tithy's aunt, told The Daily Star yesterday. "When she did not return and it was getting late, at first, we thought she might have gone to a relative's home," she said.

The family filed a general diary on October 27 with the police station in this regard, Seba added.

Contacted, SI Tariur Rahman Shuvo of the police station, said, "We went to Tithy's house on October 24 to give her GD-related information that she filed on October 23, claiming her Facebook account was hacked."

"We have already informed the higher authorities about the situation," added Shuvo, who is the investigation officer of the GD filed by Tithy's sister.

Contacted, Kazi Wazed Ali, officer-in-charge of the police station, said they are trying their best to find out Tithy's whereabouts. Meanwhile, the family is distraught over the incident.

"The health condition of my ill father had gone worse... He had to be

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Tense situation at Barishal BSCIC

Criminals assault industrialists, vandalise establishments demanding
extortion; Tk 71.5cr dev works remain halted

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

A tense situation is prevailing at Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) in Barishal industrial area for the last one month ever since some industrialists and industries were allegedly attacked by miscreants, demanding extortion.

Despite two industrial owners being hospitalised and establishments vandalised, law enforcers are yet to take legal steps against them, alleged industrialists.

They also alleged that criminals have taken away pipes worth Tk 36 lakh.

Factory owners alleged that the miscreants are getting shelter from local influential and political leaders, which is why law enforcers were showing reluctance to do anything about it, despite being informed of the situation.

Unless a conducive environment is ensured, it will not be possible to run production in the BSCIC area under the circumstances, said Mizanur

Rahman, president of BSCIC Shilpa Malik Samity in Barishal.

According to BSCIC sources, established in 1961 on an area of 130.7 acres, the one in Barishal is the largest industrial area in the country. Around 20,000 people work here.

At present, there are 196 plots where 102 factories are operating fully. In the last few years, a number of export-based industrial establishments have sprung up there, including Fortune Shoes Limited, Premier Footwear Limited, MJ Industries and Bengal Biscuit Limited, informed Rahman.

"Despite being a vibrant industrial area, infrastructure has not been developed here properly, especially road, drains and walls," he added.

He said with an aim to develop infrastructure, they were able to convince the industries ministry to allocate Tk 52 crore after much efforts. He said the allocation was eventually increased to Tk 71.5 crore recently.

The industry owners' association claimed that all development work in the BSCIC area now remain

halted due to a series of criminal attacks, including obstruction of wall construction work.

Miscreants took away dredger pipes worth Tk 36 lakh in August, which were supposed to be set up on 37 acres of low-lying land, said Rahman, also owner of Fortune Shoes.

He alleged that they have reported the matter to the ministry, but no action has been taken so far.

"On October 20 around 5:30pm, at least 20 to 25 miscreants with lethal weapons stormed the area and started asking for extortion money. They also beat me up and vandalised a truck," said Himadri Saha, owner of Moumita Bakery.

On October 24, Shafiqul Azam, brother of the owner of Fortune Shoes Limited, lodged a complaint with Kawnia Police Station naming three persons -- Roich Ahmed Manna, Hira and Hridoy -- for beating and extorting Tk 9.75 lakh from him.

Azam, who is undergoing treatment at a hospital in Dhaka, told

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DU dev fees slashed by half

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University has decided to slash development fees for all students for the ongoing academic session by half, considering financial crises during the pandemic.

The decision was taken at a university syndicate meeting yesterday. They also decided to form two separate three-member tribunals to determine punishment of three teachers who were found guilty of plagiarism.

Wishing anonymity, a syndicate member told this newspaper that the previous meeting had decided to form a tribunal to determine the punishment of Samia Rahman and Syed Mahfujul Haque Marjan, but they did not choose who will part of the tribunal. Prof Rahmat Ullah, acting dean of law faculty, was made chairperson of the tribunal at yesterday's meeting.

MINI BYTES



Trending: Cyberpunk delay, Xbox fridge & a tiny iPhone

EH SANUR RAZA RONNY

If you're a gamer, you can't wait for Cyberpunk 2077 to release. But you will have to, yet again. It has been delayed three times since its April 16 release date. And fans can't seem to take it anymore.

Outraged fans have resorted to death threats for the creator CD Projekt Red. Death by burning has been promised from one intense fan. Seriously, death threats simply aren't cool. Senior game designer Andrzej Zawadzki had to plead with fans on Twitter to exercise restraint and decency. Keanu Reeves, the darling of the internet, is in the game. Be like him. Be cool. Like he says, "Be breath-taking". Just don't take anyone's breath over a game.

The developers are set to launch it across nine platforms on December 10. The open-world, action-adventure story lets you play as a mercenary named V running after a one-of-a-kind implant to help achieve immortality.

SPEAKING OF BEING COOL

Microsoft released an Xbox fridge. When they revealed their Xbox Series X, the internet decided it looked like a fridge. So the gaming giant decide to play along with the meme squadrons and actually built a fridge. It's cool. Looks exactly like a Series X, measures six feet tall, has a lit up Xbox logo up front and even does the boot up sound each time you open it. And



it glows green. Microsoft priced it at \$499 just like the Xbox but you can't buy it. One is being given away in a competition on November 4th. Another went to Snoop Dogg.

WHILE OTHERS ARE SUPERIZING Apple is set to release the smallest iPhone in the current series 12 line-up. Preorders for the iPhone 12 mini and iPhone 12 Pro Max begin on November 6th. The mini is tiny, really, considering how used to be are at slapping a tablet on our face while making calls. The iPhone 12 mini has a 5.4-inch screen, no bezels will start at \$699. For those that remember the beautiful iPhone 4s and 5s, the new 12 mini is just under half an inch taller.

Hurray for Anandaloy

Building made of local materials in Dinajpur wins int'l architecture award

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A structure made of local resources at Dinajpur's Rudrapur village has been selected for an international architecture award.

Anandaloy, an eye-catching construction made out of natural resources such as mud and bamboo situated in Biral upazila, some 25km away from Dinajpur district town, was named winner of the Obel Award 2020 on October 21.

It hosts a therapy centre for people with disabilities on the ground floor and a textile studio on the top floor producing fair fashion and art.

"The material used for the construction is available all across Bangladesh, but they are enough to meet international standards," said Abu Towab Md Shariar, assistant professor at the Department of Architecture of Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University (HSTU) in Dinajpur.

Mud, bamboo and paddy residue were used as materials for all three structures, which were built in different styles.

The initiative was funded by Dipshikha, a non-government organisation. German architect Anna Heringer was the designer of Anandaloy.

A distinguished international jury elects the winning project of the Obel Award, which



PHOTO COURTESY: OBEL AWARD 2020

comes with a prize money worth 1,00,000 euro.

Montu Ram Shaw, supervisor of the construction work for the building, said the 253 square metre two-storied structure looks like a giant sea ship from the front. Built in the middle of a lush green field, the building's basement was constructed using brick, cement, and sand, while tins were used as the roof.

The building is dedicated to differently-abled people, Montu said while talking to this correspondent during a visit on Tuesday.

Montu said the 10-room building is 110ft in length, 40ft in width, and 22ft in height. The building boasts toilets with modern facilities on both floors. Besides, there are staircases that

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