

## BANGABANDHU BRIDGE

# Cracks not repaired in 5yrs

Experts fear this may reduce bridge's lifespan, load carrying capacity

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

The lifespan and load carrying capacity of the country's longest Bangabandhu Multipurpose Bridge are being compromised, as successive governments failed in the last five years to repair cracks formed on it, according to experts and government officials.

The 4.8-kilometre bridge, connecting the country's northern region with the capital over the Jamuna River, developed numerous cracks in 2006, just nine years after it had opened to public in 1997.

Experts said the cracks needed immediate repair, but till date the communications ministry could not select a contractor for the job, although it had invited tender thrice.

The Tk 4,000 crore bridge, with an expected lifespan of 100 years, was built by South Korean Hyundai Engineering and Construction Co Ltd.

But experts later found faults in Hyundai's design and construction that had led to the emergence of the cracks.

Against such a backdrop, the communications ministry at a meeting with the experts at the Bridge Division on July 8 this year assigned an expert panel of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) to carry out a thorough investigation of the bridge to learn about its latest condition.

Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, who headed the first such investigation team in 2006 and recommended immediate repair detecting the design and construction flaws, told The Daily Star on Wednesday, "The real danger will be if water seeps into the cracks and affect the prestressing cables."

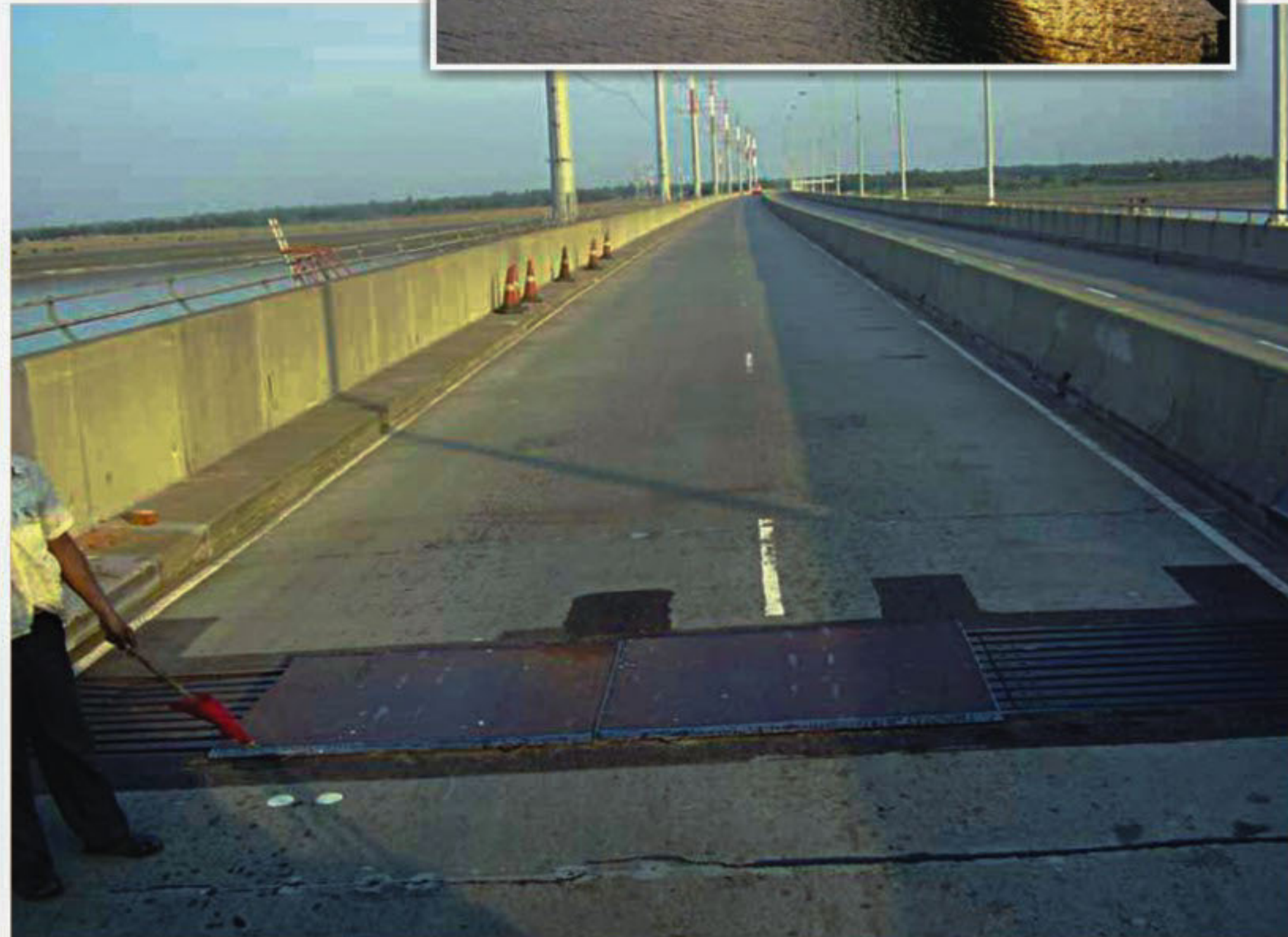
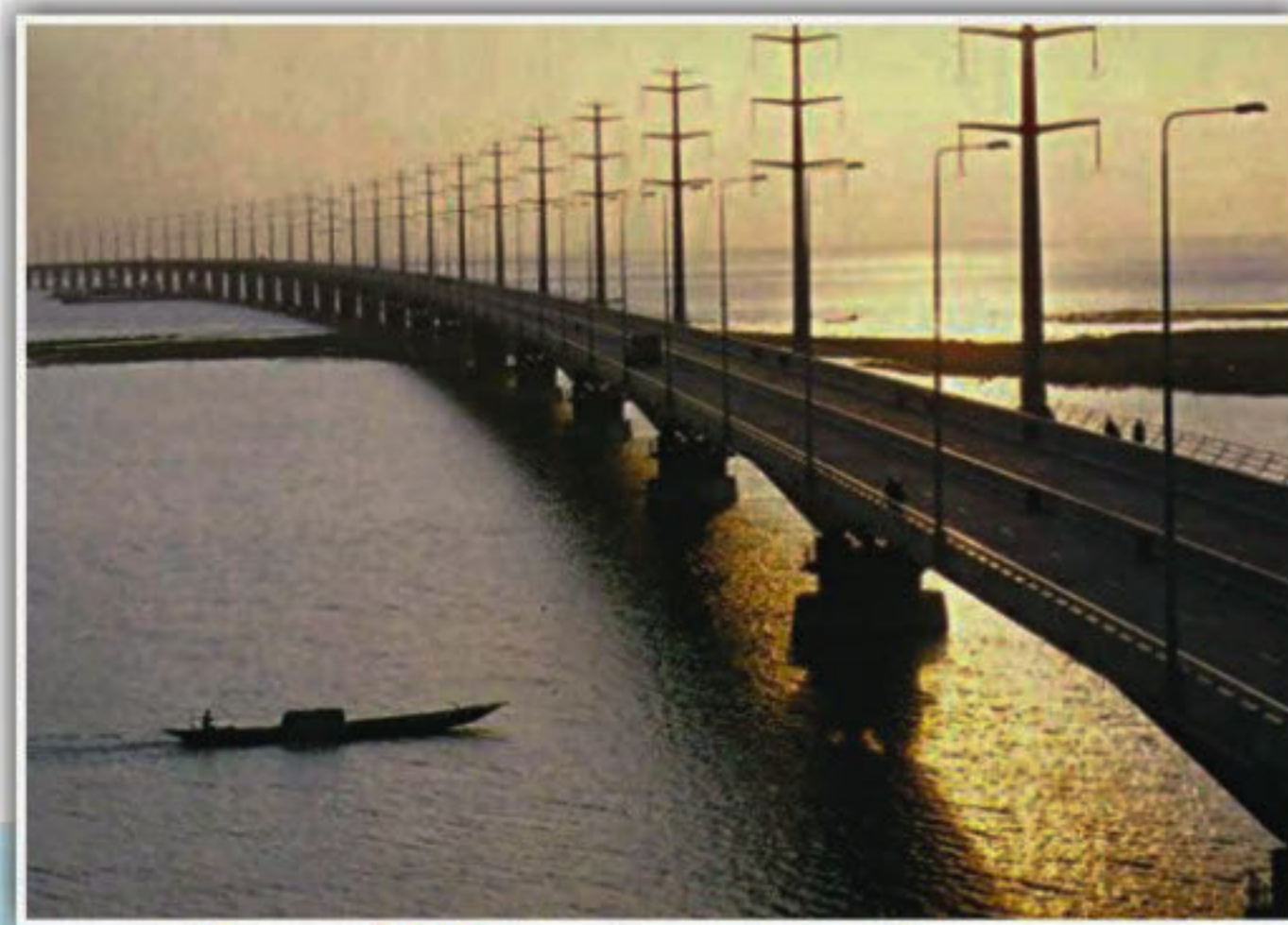
If that happens, then both the lifespan and the load bearing capacity of the bridge might be compromised, he added.

He said the condition of the bridge has been deteriorating by the day, due to the delay in repair. "I recently heard some people saying that the cracks had expanded."

The bridge allows motor vehicles and trains

**This five-year-old crack, bottom, on the Bangabandhu Bridge is yet to be repaired. The 4.8km bridge connects the northern region of Bangladesh with capital Dhaka.**

PHOTO: FILE



## POWER OUTAGE IN DINAJPUR

# 40 hurt as protesters clash with cops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Several thousand villagers, exasperated by power failure for over 24 hours, blocked the Thakurgaon-Dinajpur highway and clashed with police leaving 40 people injured yesterday.

Vehicular movement on the highway remained suspended for about four and a half hours from 12:30pm.

Police fired rubber bullets and teargas canisters, and charged baton on the villagers to disperse them.

Several thousand villagers from Shator, Bhognagar and Mahanpur unions, which

remained without power supply since Thursday morning, gathered on Thakurgaon-Dinajpur highway at Birganj upazila shortly after 11:30am.

They blocked the highway at about 12:30pm at Bottoli crossing leaving hundreds of vehicles stranded on both sides of the motorway.

On information, police personnel from Birganj Police Station went to the spot shortly before 2:50pm and asked the agitators to withdraw the blockade.

When the villagers turned down the call, police charged baton on them leaving at least

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## RMG VIOLENCE

# Two workers' leaders held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective Branch of police yesterday arrested two leaders of garment workers on charge of instigating RMG workers who went on the rampage through Tejgaon Industrial area and Gulshan on July 30.

Babul Akhter, 35, executive director of Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation and Kalpana Akhter, 34, executive director of Bangladesh Centre for Workers Solidarity (BCWS) were arrested in BCWS office at Gulshan yesterday morning.

Assistant Commissioner Sadira Khatun of DB told The Daily Star that earlier they held six female garment workers after identifying them from

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# AL activist shot dead in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified criminals gunned down an Awami League leader at Topkhana Road in the capital yesterday night.

Ibrahim Ahmed, 38, an AL activist of ward 56 of Dhaka City Corporation, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with bullet injuries on his mouth. The doctors declared him dead on arrival.

Two people brought Ibrahim to DMCH in a black microbus at about 8:00pm and left the hospital immediately leaving him at the emergency section, hospital sources said.

Ibrahim, a resident of Topkhana area, was a ward councillor aspirant, claimed his relatives.

"Political rivalry might have caused the death of Ibrahim as

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## DUBAI FIRE

# Cops to carry out DNA tests of victims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dubai police will conduct DNA tests of the foreign workers killed in Tuesday's fire at a perfume factory in Al Quoz industrial area in order to identify them and hand them over to their relatives.

The National, an Abu Dhabi-based newspaper, yesterday quoted Lt Col Ahmad al Meherri, head of Dubai police forensic department, as saying, "We have taken samples from the bodies and will match these with their relatives' once their samples are available".

He said they have passports of the victims but the bodies were burnt beyond recognition and thus it is necessary to conduct DNA tests to identify them.

The police station concerned will take necessary

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## WORKERS' SAFETY NOT ENSURED AT SHIP-BREAKING YARDS

# 24 killed in 16 months as court order ignored

PINAKI ROY

Nazrul Islam has gone back to his village in Dhunat, Bogra, after receiving treatment at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital for three months.

But he still has to fully recover from the burn injuries he suffered to his left arm, back, lower back and a leg while working at a ship-scraping yard of Rahim Steel in Sitakunda, Chittagong. He still cannot raise his left arm properly.

He said, "Doctors told me that I would not be able to work for the next two years."

Twenty-eight-year-old Nazrul earned Tk 135 (less than two dollars) for working 8 hours a day at the yard. He is just one of many who have been crippled in ship-breaking yard accidents.

However, he considers himself to be lucky. In the last 16 months at least 24 workers were killed in accidents, mostly due to explosions and coming in contact with toxic materials in ships, while 17



others were maimed in 14 accidents in 14 shipyards.

All these accidents happened as the government is yet to comply with the directives of the Supreme Court. It lets the yards operate without providing the workers with safety measures.

On March 5, 2009, the Supreme Court also directed the government not to allow import of any ships with toxic substances inside. However, the Ministry of Environment and Forest is in favour of importing ships that has "inbuilt" toxic

substances.

According to the Basel Convention, old ships are themselves treated as hazardous waste due to their inbuilt toxic substances. Cleaning ships made with toxic materials, including asbestos, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), lead, chromates, mercury, organic liquids (benzene etc), battery, is hard and involves huge cost.

Being a signatory of the Basel Convention, Bangladesh is supposed to ratify it fully. The Supreme Court also directed the government on March 5, 2009, "We are inclined to follow the Basel Convention."

The Supreme Court said, "...the import of any further vessel, being hazardous waste or contaminating hazardous materials, which has not been decontaminated at source, must be prohibited for the purpose of import into Bangladesh."

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## Extortionists

# shoot three auto-rickshaw drivers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Extortionists shot and injured three CNG-run auto-rickshaw drivers demanding extortion from the owners of garages at West Ulon in city's Rampura area yesterday morning.

The victims, Abdus Salam, 45, Faruque, 45, and Baharul, 42, were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with bullets in their legs.

Bachchu Mia, a witness, said two armed youths shot at the drivers around 8:00am as they reached the garages of Farhad and Saber Uddin to bring out auto-rickshaws.

The armed youths looked for the owners of the garages and as the owners were not available, the assailants fired gunshots and fled the scene, added Bachchu.

Some local extortionists demanded extortion but the

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## স্মরণ



আজ ১৪ ই আগস্ট, পিপলস্ সিরামিক ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ ও স্ট্যান্ডার্ড সিরামিক ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ এর প্রতিষ্ঠাতা ও সাবেক ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক - মরহুম আলহাজ্ব আনসার উদ্দিন আহমেদ এর ৫ম মৃত্যু বার্ষিকী। তাঁকে অপার শ্রদ্ধার সাথে স্মরণ করে তাঁর বিদেহী আত্মার মাগফেরাত কামনা করছি।

## মরহমের পরিবারবর্গ



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## আস্থার নির্মাণে নতুন মাত্রা

গত ৩ যুগ ধরে Meghna Group of Industries দেশের অর্থনীতিতে অন্যতম বলিষ্ঠ ভূমিকা পালন করে আসছে। অভ্যন্তরীণ চাহিদা মেটানোর পাশাপাশি এ গ্রুপ বৈদেশিক বাণিজ্যের মাধ্যমে আন্তর্জাতিক অঙ্গনে দেশের ভাবমূর্তি সমৃদ্ধ করছে।

ফ্রেশ সিমেন্ট ২০০৮ সাল থেকে BIS (ব্ল্যুরো অব ইন্ডিয়ান স্ট্যান্ডার্ডস)-এর স্বীকৃতি পাবার মাধ্যমে ভারতে ফ্রেশ সিমেন্ট রপ্তানী করে দেশের জন্য অতি মূল্যবান বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা অর্জন করছে, যা জাতীয় অর্থনীতিতে বিশাল ভূমিকা রাখছে এবং অর্থনীতিকে করে তুলছে সমৃদ্ধশালী।

ফ্রেশ সিমেন্ট, সিমেন্ট তৈরীতে আন্তর্জাতিক মান বজায় রেখে রপ্তানী বাণিজ্যের ধারাবাহিকতায় ভারতের ত্রিপুরা রাজ্যে Indian Government (PWD)-এর Tender-এ ১৮,০০০ মেট্রিক টন ফ্রেশ সিমেন্ট রপ্তানীর অনুমোদন পায়, যা আন্তর্জাতিক অঙ্গনে দেশীয় শিল্পের এক অভূতপূর্ব সাফল্য। ফ্রেশ সিমেন্টের এই সাফল্য দেশের অর্থনীতির চাকাকে আরো বেগবান করে দেশকে নিয়ে যাবে উন্নতির চূড়ায়।

ফ্রেশ সিমেন্ট গুণগতমানের উচ্চত্বতা বজায় রেখে সমৃদ্ধশালী দেশ গঠনের লক্ষ্যে আন্তর্জাতিক অঙ্গনে দেশের নাম সমৃদ্ধ রাখতে বদ্ধপরিকর।

**ফ্রেশ সিমেন্ট...আস্থার নির্মাণে সীমানা ছাড়িয়ে ...**

**ইউনিক সিমেন্ট ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ লিমিটেড**

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ফোন: ৮৮-০২-৯৮৮৯৩০৬, ৯৮৮৯৪৯০, ৯৮৮৪৮৫৬

ফ্যাক্স: ৮৮-০২-৯৮৮৪৮৯৬, ৯৮৮৯৩৬১