

**Did you know?** Donghai Bridge was the longest cross-sea bridge in the world until Hangzhou Bay Bridge opened on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2008. It was completed on December 10, 2005. It has a total length of 32.5 km (20.2 miles) and connects mainland Shanghai and the offshore Yangshan deep-water port in China. Most of the bridge is a low-level viaduct. There are also cable-stayed sections to allow for the passage of large ships, largest with span of 420m.

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# Poly bags rule despite ban

Nylon bags no more an alternative, say experts

HELEMUL ALAM

Despite a ban on polythene shopping bags, they are being traded and used throughout the country thanks to inadequate drive against their manufacture and an absence of cost effective environment friendly alternatives. The nylon bags can no longer be considered as an alternative, since they are also found to be non-biodegradable like polythene, said Dhaka University experts.

Use of polythene shopping bags is a common sight at the shops, markets and households. Though there is a ban on its use, both its manufacturers and users show no legal concern.

There are around 300 factories manufacturing polythene bags in Dhaka, most located in the old town, said retailers and insiders of the manufacturing factories.

The major polythene bag wholesale markets are in Chawkbazar, Begumbazar and Moulvibazar in Dhaka. These markets also supply polythene bags to other districts, they said.

Bhairab Bazar in Kishoreganj is the largest polythene bag market. Also it is being manufactured illegally in other districts such as

Chittagong, Munshiganj, Bogra and Shariatpur, they said.

At Jurain kitchen market, a shopkeeper said they prefer using polythene bag as there are no better means to carry fish or meat by their customers.

The government banned the manufacture, marketing and use of polythene shopping bags in the capital with effect from January 1, 2002, followed by a nationwide ban from March 31.

Though the Department of Environment (DoE) conducts drives against the polythene bag manufacturers and sellers, it is not sufficient to stop their use permanently, said Save Environment Movement Chairman Abu Naser Khan.

Munir Chowdhury, DoE Director (monitoring and enforcement) in Dhaka, made similar remarks and said such drives will be continued until all the illegal manufacturers have been uprooted.

He stated that an environment court can fine a maximum of Tk 5,000 and slap a six-month imprisonment sentence against marketing of illegal polythene shopping bags. The court should be empowered to fine Tk 10 lakh and award 10 years' imprisonment sentence

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Poly bags clog the Manda Canal in the capital's Sabujbagh. Even though there is a ban on the use and production of such bags, the photo of the blocked canal taken yesterday is a testament to how effective the ban has been.

## Afghans vote amid Taliban attacks

AP, Kabul

Afghans braved Taliban rockets and polling site bombings yesterday to vote for a new parliament in elections seen as a measure of the government's competence and commitment to democratic rule.

It was the first nationwide balloting since a fraud-marred presidential election last year undermined international support for President Hamid Karzai. Security has worsened since then, and the Taliban made good on threats to disrupt yesterday's polling.

At least three civilians were killed and the governor of Kandahar province survived a bomb attack, officials said. Observers had expected the

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## BURIGANGA CLEAN UP Polluters must pay

Seminar seeks integrated approach for river drive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muzaffer Ahmad, Bapa president and a noted economist.

The polluters of the river Thames, famous for its history, were made to pay by a law in 1383, said Prof Md Mujibur Rahman of civil engineering department of Buet while making the keynote presentation.

He recommended stopping tannery and domestic wastes from releasing in the river, cleaning the riverbed in a planned and scientific manner to restore the water quality of the four rivers around Dhaka.

Citing official records, Bapa Joint Secretary Mihir Biswas said a total of 6000 tonnes of liquid waste is dumped into the Buriganga every day, half of which comes from Hazaribagh tanneries.

Buriganga and other rivers around the capital are polluted every day with thousands of tonnes of solid and liquid wastes coming from domestic and industrial sources, he added.

Toxic heavy metal like chromium, used in

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## BNP slates leaders' travel 'bar'

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday termed 'illegal, autocratic, unconstitutional and undemocratic' the government restriction to leave the country imposed on 70 leaders of the party.

He strongly protested the government's measure and demanded immediate withdrawal of the restriction. As per law of the land, every citizen has the fundamental right to go abroad, he said while briefing the newsmen at the party central office at noon.

"If any specific allegation is there against anyone, the government may take legal course," he said adding the government is curbing the basic rights of the citizens defying the law.

The BNP leader pointed to the restriction on BNP Chairperson's Adviser Reaz Rahman and BNP Joint Secretary General Barrister

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## ANTHRAX INFECTION Fresh cases reported

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as 18 fresh cases of anthrax infection have been detected at Gilabari village of Aditmari upazila in Lalmonirhat district yesterday.

With this, the district has so far witnessed 94 anthrax-infected people, confirmed the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR).

A total of 60 patients of the district have been cured and the rest are being treated in upazila health complex and in their houses, said a source from Lalmonirhat sadar health complex.

According to IEDCR, a total of 520 people contracted anthrax between August 18 and September 16 this year. More than half the patients have been cured so far.

Meanwhile, 30 more people are feared to have infected with anthrax at Kamalnagar upazila in Lakshmipur district on Friday and Saturday. Based on the symptoms, the acting district civil surgeon has started administering medicine.

This is the second time in the country that humans are infected with anthrax although the disease is not new to cattle. IEDCR records show that the first human infection occurred in the country in August last year. A total of 35 people in Sathia and Pabna contracted the disease at that time.

IEDCR virologist ASM Alamgir said, "The lifestyle of people may be the reason behind the anthrax outbreak. People in our country slaughter sick cattle and eat the meat to save money of recover losses. Poverty and lack of awareness is responsible for

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## 2 commit 'suicide'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two persons including a college student allegedly committed suicide in the city's Mohammadpur and cantonment areas yesterday.

They were identified as Touhid Jamal, 23, a 2nd year student of English department of Dhaka College, and Sumaiya Akhter Sumi, a resident of Purba Manikdi in Dhaka cantonment.

Touhid jumped off the roof of a six-storey building at Mohammadia Housing of Mohammadpur around 6:00am yesterday, police sources said. He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

He used to live with his

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Prayer Timing

September 19

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-35	5-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-09	6-12
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Safety lapse likely cause for Lanka blast

AP, Colombo

Improperly stored detonators are likely to have triggered a dynamite explosion that killed 25 people and injured dozens in eastern Sri Lanka, police said yesterday.

Three containers of explosives used for road construction exploded Friday inside a police compound, destroying the police station and a nearby agriculture office crowded with farmers.

A police officer involved in the investigation said the detonators were stored together with dynamite in one of the containers and may

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