



# The Daily Star

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## HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE

Former police chief writes on excesses by law enforcers and ways to address the issue

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## NEW TEAM FOR SHAKIB

Jamaica Tallawahs splash \$50,000 on Bangladesh ace for CPL 2016

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# Big boost for trade, travel

Expansion of Dhaka-Ctg, Dhaka-Mymensingh highways to complete by June

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

Conversion work of two major highways into dual carriageways is in the final stage and it will boost trade and travel in a major way. Travel times will be cut drastically once the work of broadening the highways, Dhaka-Chittagong and Dhaka-Mymensingh, is finished this June.

There have been delays stretching into years in the completion of the projects. Costs also went up considerably, but the works are expected to be completed by middle of this year.

The road transport and bridges ministry will officially open the four-lane highways in May but officials involved in the projects say that a month or two more would be required.

Expansion of the Dhaka-Chittagong highway would make traffic movement easier and faster and boost import-export and trade through the country's economic lifeline.

People are already benefiting from the widened parts of both the highways from shortened travel times, said engineers and experts.

Mir Mobasher Ali Swapan, managing director of Horizon Group that exports readymade garments to Canada, the USA and some European countries, is seeing faster shipment of his time sensitive

products.

"Nowadays, I send my products to the Chittagong Port in five to six hours. It used to be 24-hours or more with the congested narrow highway," he told The Daily Star.

"This gives us a huge advantage," he added.

About 90 percent of the country's export-imports are done through the Chittagong Port. A majority of the goods are transported by the Dhaka-Chittagong highway.

Travelling on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway last week, The Daily Star reporter saw workers laying the surface and building the central reservation and overpasses at three level-crossings in Comilla, Feni and Chittagong.

All types of vehicles were using the newly constructed additional lanes of the widened highway.

Even though there were no tailbacks, vehicles had to stop or slow down at every bazaar, intersection, and stretches of the highway where the widening work was still going on.

Truck driver Abu Kalam, who was heading to Chittagong, told The Daily Star at Shahidnagar Bazar he would reach his destination in three hours. "Nowadays, if I

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A stretch of the Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Daudkandi of Comilla and, *bottom*, a snap of the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Salna area of Gazipur. Conversion of these highways into dual carriageways will immensely boost trade and travel in the country.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## HIGHWAY EXPANSION

● Dhaka-Chittagong	192km	● Dhaka-Mymensingh	87km
● Project first undertaken	2006	● Project launched	2010
● Finalised, deal signed	2010	● Deals signed	2011
● Work began	2011	● Original cost	Tk 904cr
● Original cost	Tk 1,655cr	● Final cost	Tk 1,815cr
● Final cost	Tk 3,800cr	● Delay	2 years
● Delay	3 years		



## Mahmoud Abbas due tomorrow

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas will make his first stopover in Dhaka early tomorrow on his way to three Asian countries.

Abbas along with his high-profile delegation is expected to reach Shahjalal International Airport around 12:30am for an hour, said diplomatic sources.

Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali will receive the president at the airport.

The Palestinian delegation will include Foreign

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## EP worried over rights situation

Delegation says European Parliament concerned about freedom of speech, urges 'agreed mechanism' for 2019 polls

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A European Parliament (EP) delegation has expressed concern over the human rights situation in Bangladesh, and called for an impartial investigation into all the cases of blogger killings.

Jean Lambert, who led a four-member EP delegation to Bangladesh, yesterday said they during a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Wednesday had raised four specific issues including human rights, murder of bloggers and rise of violent extremism at international level.

"We have serious concerns about the human rights situation in the country and raised the issue of the murder of bloggers," said Lambert, the chair of the EP delegation on relations with the countries of South Asia, at a press conference in Dhaka.

"The life of every Bangladeshi citizen is important and we requested the full and impartial investigation of all the cases."

She also urged the government to make an environment where bloggers and other free thinkers feel that their freedom of expression was "valued".

European Union (EU) Ambassador in Dhaka Pierre Mayaudon was also



Jean Lambert

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## Rohingya census begins in 6 dists

Govt to list undocumented Myanmar citizens

STAR REPORT

The government yesterday began a household survey to register the undocumented Rohingya population and also to get an idea of the circumstances under which they fled their home country, Myanmar.

A census will follow the survey to determine the number of Rohingyas living in Bangladesh and their socioeconomic conditions, said Alamgir Hossain, the project director.

This would be the first ever census on the unregistered Rohingya population, an ethnic Muslim minority in Buddhist-majority Myanmar that does not recognise them as its

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## DUBIOUS TRANSACTIONS

## EBL shuts down ATMs for 6 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Eastern Bank Ltd yesterday shut down operations of all of its ATM booths for six hours, after 21 banking transactions were deemed suspicious.

Ziaul Karim, a spokesperson for the private bank, said the bank had suspended operations of its 200 ATM booths from 12:00pm to 6:00pm after some clients informed the bank's call centre about the suspected transactions.

"We had shut down the system as a precaution. However, our system went live again at 6:00pm," he told The Daily Star.

Quoting the complainants, the official said the clients told the call centre that they received short messages about the transactions on their mobile phones although they did not use their cards to withdraw money.

Ziaul said the suspected transactions were carried out not at EBL's own ATM booths, but at the booths of some other banks interconnected through the National Payment Switch.

The bank instantly informed the central bank, which operates the National Payment Switch.

The bank deactivated the 21 cards in question. "The cards will be reactivated after we find out whether the transactions were legal," he said.

Customers who would turn out to be victims of the fraud need not worry about the money, as they will be refunded by the EBL, he added.

## Welcome spring



RIFAT MUNIM

Spring is knocking on our door. You can feel it in the air: the dryness gone from the atmosphere and the biting cold superseded by a calming wind that loosens you up from icy inertia.

After a chilling winter, Basanta has arrived again to paint nature in green, to make the wilted plants upright in vigour and most importantly, to transport us higher from

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Members of a UNO-led mobile court, which foiled two child marriages in Natore Sadar, talking to one of the victims. Story on page 4.

PHOTO: STAR



## ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশন

৮১, গুলশান এভিনিউ

নগর ভবন, ঢাকা।

## জনসচেতনতামূলক বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশন কর্তৃক গুলশান-বনানী ও বারিধারা এলাকায় জলাবদ্ধতা নিরসনে বিভিন্ন সড়কে পাইপ নর্দমা নির্মাণসহ ফুটপাথ ও সড়ক উন্নয়নের কার্যক্রম হাতে নেয়া হয়েছে। উন্নয়ন কাজ চলাকালীন বিশেষ করে পাইপ নর্দমা নির্মাণকালে পথচারী ও যানবাহন চলাচলে সাময়িক অসুবিধার সৃষ্টি হতে পারে। ডিএমপি (ট্রাফিক) যানবাহন নিয়ন্ত্রনে সার্বিক সহযোগিতা করছে। উন্নয়ন কাজের স্বার্থে সম্মানিত এলাকাবাসীর এ সাময়িক অসুবিধার জন্য ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশন আন্তরিকভাবে দুঃখিত।

উন্নয়নের স্বার্থে সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের সার্বিক সহযোগিতা কামনাসহ উন্নয়ন কাজ চলাকালীন যথাসম্ভব বিকল্প সড়ক ব্যবহারের জন্য বিনীত অনুরোধ জানানো যাচ্ছে।

কর্তৃপক্ষ

ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশন।