

# DHAKA RETURNS TO NORMALCY



Life is back to normal in the capital, as Dhaka once again sees traffic congestion yesterday afternoon with people heading home after work (left), while many are still on their way back after enjoying Eid with their families at their village homes (top right), whereas it is business as usual for the vendors who occupy the city footpaths and streets hoping to attract customers. The photos were taken from the capital's Farmgate area, Kawkhali Launch Terminal in Pirojpur and the capital's Motijheel area. PHOTOS: STAR

## NEWS IN brief


### Missing teacher's body recovered from Bandarban waterfall

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban  
The body of a college teacher, who went missing in Rujuk waterfall in Ruma upazila of Bandarban, was found yesterday morning. Towfic Siddiquee, a professor of Government Azizul Haque College of Bogra, went missing while bathing in the fall with his family members and friends on Saturday, said Sub-Inspector of Ruma Police Station Md Mizan. Towfic, head of the department, went to visit the spot along with friends and family on Saturday morning.


### 2-year-old Rangpur girl found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur  
Police recovered the body of a two-year-old girl from a banana orchard near Rangpur-Kurigram road in Rangpur city on Sunday. The deceased Alifa, daughter of Dudu Mia of Darshana-Mandai area in the city might have been strangled and left there, said police. However, the motive behind the killing could not be known yet, said Azizul Islam, inspector (investigation) of Rangpur Sadar Upazila Police Station. A case was filed in this connection and the body was sent to Rangpur Medical College Hospital for an autopsy, he added.

### Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
 Enayet Ullah, founding member of Dhaka Sangbadpatra Hawkers Bohumukhi Samabaya Samity (DSHBSS), died in a city hospital on September 13. He was 80. He was the circulation manager of DSHBSS and a senior member of Dhaka Sangbadpatra Hawkers Union and Sangbadpatra Sebi Bohumukhi Samabaya Samity Ltd. Hailed from Kasimnagar village in Laxmipur, he left behind his wife, three sons and two daughters, said a press release. DSHBSS President Mostofa Kamal and Secretary Moslem Mia mourned his death.

### Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
 Today is the 14th death anniversary of poet and writer Abul Khair Muslehuddin, said a press release. On the occasion, Abul Khair Muslehuddin Foundation will arrange a quarakhani and a doa mahfil in his village under Laksam upazila of Comilla. He served as the director general of the Bureau of Anti-Corruption (now defunct), acting IG of police and chairman of Bangladesh Bostro Shilpo Sangstha. For his contribution to literature he received many awards including Kabi Jasim Uddin Sahitto award and Sher-e-Bangla Smriti award.

# Forests shrinking fast

Says official statistics; experts warn of environmental hazards

UNB, Dhaka  
The country's natural forests, habitats to wildlife and havens for many rare plants, are declining at an alarming rate for lack of effective conservation efforts, say experts. "Once about 86 percent of the country's forests were the natural ones, but today you will find a very poor track of land covered by natural forests as those are shrinking..." said Farid Uddin Ahmed, executive director of Arannayk Foundation, a joint initiative of the Bangladesh and US governments. If the natural forests decline, he said, the country will lose biodiversity and wildlife creating many environmental hazards. According to the draft of Forest Sector Master Plan 2016 prepared by Bangladesh Forest Department, natural hill forests were 128,630 hectares in 1990, which declined to 79,160 hectares in 2015.

Forest department data reveal that the worst-affected forests are the inland deciduous Shal forests and bamboo forests. Shal forest was on 23,650 hectares in 1990 and it now depleted to 17,490 hectares. Natural bamboo forest was on 89,790 hectares in 1990 and it came down to 15,000 hectares in 2015. The country's natural mangrove forests, including the Sundarbans, are also showing a declining trend, although those provide important ecosystem services and functions as a protective barrier against coastal erosion. Official data show that natural mangrove forest was on about 401,000 hectares in 1990 but it dropped to 390,000 hectares in 2015.

FORESTS	2015 (hectares)	1990 (hectares)
The Sundarbans	390,000	401,000
Shal	17,490	23,650
Hill	79,160	128,630
Bamboo	15,000	89,790

SOURCE: BANGLADESH FOREST DEPARTMENT

Chief Conservator of Forests Md Yunus Ali told the news agency that unplanned urbanisation and industrialisation and construction of many establishments as well as roads contribute to the rapid decline of natural forests. The forest department does not have enough capacity to conserve natural forests, Farid Uddin said, revealing that about 22 percent of posts of the department are vacant, which is about 50 percent in Bangladesh Forestry Research Institute. Eminent environmentalist Dr Atiq Rahman said if the natural system of a forest is destroyed, the enabling lives, wildlife and biodiversity will be extinct. "The forests

must be protected...to do so, we need science-based-knowledge and proper tools as well," he said. Dr Rahman, also executive director of Bangladesh Centre for Advance Studies (BCAS), said it is time to regenerate natural forests since pressure of excessive population is mounting on forest resources. Ishtiaq Uddin Ahmed, country representative of IUCN Bangladesh, said the country's natural forest coverage is rapidly declining. According to IUCN Red List of Bangladesh 2015 published on July 15, 2016, 31 species -- 11 animals, 19 birds and one reptile -- have disappeared from the country due to destruction of natural forests. Wildteam Chief Executive Prof Anwarul Islam said the natural forests, which provide safe haven to wildlife, are getting fragmented day by day, putting the wildlife at risk.

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## Charges cognisance

FROM PAGE 3  
Rezaul Hauq alias Akkas Moulvi, 65, and Badaruzzaman alias Chand Kazi, 65, are of Muktagachha upazila in Mymensingh. ABM Yunus Ali, 65, his brother AKM Yusuf Ali alias Yusuf Alam, 60, Omar Faruk alias Omar Ali, 70, Nasiruddin alias Kalu, 64, AKM Belayet Hossain, 64, and Ismaili Hossain, 65, are of Jamalpur sadar upazila. Rezaul, Yunus, Yusuf and Omar Faruk are now in jail while the rest on the run. The tribunal's investigation agency on May 4 said to have found evidence and provided the documents to the prosecution the next day. The agency says Badaruzzaman was a local Razakar commander while the others were involved with Al-Badr Bahini. The crimes include torture and killing of three people of Malatipur Pathalia village on May 13; killing of five cobblers from Chechua Kurigram on June 27 and killing of a class VIII student, Ahmmad Ali of Subarnakhila village, on August 5 for chanting the Joy Bangla slogan. The others are over the killing of seven people of Kejaikanda Konagaon on August 5; brutal torture of two freedom fighters and their disappearance on November 12 and torture of one Abdul Latif, a freedom fighter's brother, and torching of his house on November 12. The remaining incidents concern the killing of Azizur Rahman on November 20 for assisting freedom fighters; and killing of doctor Anil Kumar Singha on November 26.

A mobile court yesterday demolishing the illegal establishments in the forest department's Himchari fountain site near Marine Drive Road in Cox's Bazar. PHOTO: STAR



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