

# Govt planning to form 'rumour detection centre'

Says information minister

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
The government is planning to establish a "rumour detection and prevention centre" where media can verify news with the relevant spokesperson, to prevent rumours in times of crises.  
"We need to establish it as soon as possible. We will discuss the matter with the prime minister and hold intra-ministerial meetings to initiate it," Information Minister Hasanul Huq Inu said yesterday while speaking at a discussion on the role of mass media and social media to tackle rumours.  
Press Information Department organised the programme at the capital's Cirdap auditorium.  
Speakers at the discussion, where most of the participants were media professionals, said rumours spread when flow of information is limited and there is no proper information management.  
They also mentioned some past and recent incidents like the BDR mutiny and road safety movement, when the mass media had trouble getting verified information.  
The journalists said the government should provide verified news in times of crises, before the rumours spread.  
Prime Minister's Media Advisor Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury said, "The right infor-

mation should be delivered at the right time, and the government should have faith in the media to tackle rumours."  
Farida Yasmin, general secretary of Jatiya Press Club, said people find alternative ways if they cannot express their opinions freely. "The government should be more media-friendly to stop spreading of rumours," she added.  
Inu, who was the chief guest at the programme, said, "It is right that we need to ensure flow of correct information. We the government, as well as the mainstream media, should take the responsibility to tackle rumours."  
Shahnaz Sharmeen, chief reporter of Nagorik TV, said such a situation arose because there was a lack of information. "If we had been allowed to broadcast from the Awami League office in Dhanmondi during the road safety protests, the rumours would not have spread," she said.  
She cited an example: "My daughter is a ninth-grader who took part in the student protest for road safety. When the rumours spread on Facebook about the incident in Jigatola, I could not convince her that it was not true, as there was no information on broadcast media."  
On the political gains of rumours, SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



**RELIEF IN THE FORM OF RAIN:** Dhaka residents found respite from suffocating heat thanks to the sudden rain yesterday afternoon. This photo was taken at Bangla Motor intersection.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

# Shut down 14 hospitals in Mohammadpur: HC

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
The High Court yesterday directed the government to immediately shut down 14 private hospitals and clinics in Dhaka's Mohammadpur as they do not have any valid licence.  
Director General of Directorate of Health Services and executive magistrate concerned of Rapid Action Battalion have been ordered to close operation of the medical centres on Babar Road, Khilji Road and Humayun Road.  
The HC bench of Justice Sheikh Hassan Arif and Justice Ahmed Sohail passed the order and issued the rule following a writ petition filed by Human

Rights and Peace for Bangladesh.  
Advocate Ripan Barai filed the petition on its behalf as public interest litigation on September 10 following a report published in the daily Bonik Barta on April 20 under the headline, "Non-government hospitals in the capital: 26 hospitals within 500 meters; 14 of them illegal."  
The report said those hospitals and clinics do not have valid documents for operations, sufficient staff, doctors, nurses and surgical instruments. Their businesses are run relying on some middlemen.  
It also added that many government doctors see patients there since they

either own these health centres or have chambers there.  
The establishments are -- BDM Hospital and Diagnostic Center; Sebika General Hospital; Jonoseba Nursing Home And Diagnostic Center; Life Care Nursing Home; Royal Multispecialty Hospital; Nawab Siraj ud-Daulah Manoshik and Madokashakto Hospital; Manmita Mental Hospital; Plazma Medical Service and Clinic; Shefa Hospital and Diagnostic Centre; Islamia Mental Hospital; Crescent Hospital and Diagnostic Complex; Makkah Madina General Hospital and Diagnostics;  
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# Rape of Tripura Girls Victims being denied justice: Rights groups

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Right activists yesterday expressed their frustration at police's failure to identify the rapists of two Tripura girls of Bandarban, though the victims have already identified them.  
Two Tripura girls, aged 12 and 17, were allegedly raped by two members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in Lama upazila of the district on August 22.  
"Delaying means denying justice to the victims," said Rina Roy, Director, Programme, Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF).  
She was speaking at a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity, organised by eight rights organisations that have recently

visited Lama and recorded statements of locals.  
They talked with the Upazila Nirbahi Officer, officer-in-charge of Lama Police Station, local representatives and others.  
Reading out a statement, Rina said calling out victims from their home and raping them at gun-point is a grave allegation.  
"Though police have arrested one indigenous woman -- Jonerun Tripura -- in connection with the case, the main accused are yet to be arrested, which is very concerning and a violation of law," she said.  
Quoting Subhash Tripura, former president of Tripura Kalyan Samity, Rina said  
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# DU syndicate sacks two teachers

**DU CORRESPONDENT**  
The authorities of Dhaka University on Monday terminated two of its faculty members as they did not join work after completing their study leave.  
The decision was made at a meeting of the DU syndicate, the highest governing body of the university, with DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman in the chair.  
Assistant Prof Mashfiqur Rahman Khan of the economics department and Lecturer Tamanna Afrin Rimi of the development studies department went on study leave, but did not return to their posts within the due dates, said a member of the DU syndicate seeking anonymity.  
The syndicate also asked a number of other teachers, currently on leave, to join their respective departments within the next eight weeks.  
Going against the selection board that recommended recruiting three teachers in the sociology department, the syndicate decided to hire two only, dropping the name of SM Faizul Haque Ishan amid allegation of nepotism.  
In another development, National Professor Anisuzzaman was selected as the convocation speaker for the university's 51st convocation, scheduled to be held on October 6.  
Earlier, on May 9, Nobel peace laureate Leymah Gbowee, a Liberian peace activist, was proposed to be invited as the chief guest at the convocation.



**Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) demolishes illegal structure on footpath in Dhaka's Mohakhali area. The photo was taken yesterday.**

PHOTO: RASHED SUMON

# EVM project to be placed at next Ecneec meeting

**Says planning minister**  
**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Planning Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal yesterday said the electronic voting machine (EVM) project will be placed at the next meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) for approval.  
He was briefing reporters after the weekly Ecneec meeting.  
The project evaluation committee of the planning ministry assessed a proposal from the Election Commission (EC) to purchase 1.5 lakh EVMs at a cost of Tk 3,821 crore.  
The planning minister yesterday said though EVMs may be used in the next election, it will be on a trial basis.  
Under the proposed five-year project (July 2018 to June 2023), the money will be spent on purchasing the machines, training concerned officials, introducing voters to the machines through various orientation programmes, and establishing relevant infrastructure.  
The EC forwarded the proposal to the planning ministry  
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# Lawyer missing in capital since Friday

**Family requests PM's intervention for his safe return**  
**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
A member of Dhaka Bar Association went missing since Friday, said his family members at a press conference in the capital's Crime Reporters' Association yesterday.  
They said to have filed a general diary (GD) with Pallabi Police Station the same night after advocate Shoukat Akbar, 42, did not return home since leaving his house around noon for juma prayers at a nearby mosque in Mirpur.  
Requesting the prime minister's intervention for his safe return, Shoukat's wife Chania Akter said, "Please return my husband, at least for [the sake of] our 10-month-old daughter."  
All the while the infant, in her uncle's arms next to her mother, stared at her father's photograph in a banner in the conference room.  
Chania said although her husband was seen in CCTV footage coming out of the mosque, he never returned home.  
Shoukat, who worked as a legal adviser for several commercial banks, did not have any enemies other than dispute over land with his relatives, and was not involved in politics, she said.  
His relatives might also be responsible for his disappearance, as they "exercised influence to get him terminated" from private banks nearly a year and a half ago, she alleged.  
"A general diary was filed in October last year as they had threatened my husband with death," Chania added.  
Contacted, Sub-inspector Arif Hossain of Pallabi police said they were trying to trace advocate Shoukat.

# Hawa Bhaban's conspiracy, endorsed by Tarique

**Says prosecution on Aug 21 grenade attack**  
**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
The grenade attack on Awami League rally on August 21, 2004 that killed 24 people was the outcome of a conspiracy which was finalised at Hawa Bhaban and Tarique Rahman gave the ultimate endorsement, prosecution said yesterday.  
The grisly attack was carried out to kill Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina and other Awami League leaders so that the then government could remain in power permanently, Mosharraf Hossain Kajal, one of the public prosecutors, said.  
Kajal was placing rebuttal against the arguments of the defence counsels of August 21 grenade attack cases for third day at Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 of Dhaka.  
Tarique, the current acting chairman of BNP, is the principal accused in the cases and is being tried in absentia. The state-appointed defence counsel for him denied his involvement in the offences.  
At least 24 people were killed and around 300 injured in grenade attacks on Awami League rally at Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21, 2004. Sheikh Hasina, the then opposition leader of the parliament, escaped narrowly with an ear injury.  
Two cases -- one for murder and another under the Explosive Substances Act -- were filed against 49 people with Motijheel Police Station and the court is conducting trial of both cases simultaneously.  
Kajal said the conspiracy, hatched to carry out the grenade attack, was like an umbrella and many came under it to serve their common interest by killing Sheikh Hasina.  
Mufti Abdul Hannan, executed leader of militant outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami Bangladesh (Huji) and also an accused, and his cohorts wanted to introduce fundamentalism in the country while state and deputy ministers wanted to get promotion, and police and intelligence officials wanted to be in the government's good books, Kajal said.  
Mutual interest brought all of them together even though many of them were not familiar with each other, he said, adding that the conspiracy took its final shape at Hawa Bhaban and Tarique Rahman gave the final endorsement.  
All of them were part of the conspiracy and they should be held liable equally for committing such heinous offences, he said.  
He said though such conspiracy is hatched privately and evidence is rarely found, circumstantial evidence and activities of the accused are enough to prove the cases.  
Refuting defence arguments that many of the accused were not named in the First Information Report (FIR), he said FIR is not "encyclopedia" and further investigation found involvement of many of the accused.  
After the attack, evidence was destroyed by the state and administration, so the FIR cannot be taken seriously, he said.  
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