



It's forbidden for vehicles to park on bridges. Yet about 100 trucks remain parked on the Tukebazar Bridge in Sylhet Sadar Upazila from morning till evening every day. Locals alleged the authorities turn a blind eye although moving vehicles and locals face difficulties to use this busy bridge. The photo was taken yesterday.
PHOTO: NASIR SHEIKH

BNP close to forging parties.

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However, it remains uncertain if Bikalpadhara Bangladesh President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury will join hands.
Last month, Bikalpadhara Bangladesh, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) and Nagorik Oikya formed a new alliance called Juktafront, which recently forged unity with Dr Kamal's Jatiya Oikya Prokriya.
But Badruddoza was not present when Dr Kamal announced this "greater national unity" on September 15, which raised questions about the fate of the alliance.
"We welcome AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury to join the unity process. If he does not come, he will just lag behind," said a senior BNP leader, wishing anonymity.
Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, a component of the BNP-led 20-party alliance, is not in this process. At the moment, Jamaat is not registered with the Election Commission, which is mandatory for political parties to contest the election.
Asked about this, several Jamaat leaders said it was up to the BNP if it wanted to forge unity with other political parties and that it would not have any impact on their 20-party alliance.
The BNP has long been trying to forge a national unity among political

parties.
BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, who is in London, instructed the party leaders to complete the unity process in the shortest possible time, sources said.
As part of the process, the BNP will share parliamentary seats with its potential partners, including Bikalpadhara Bangladesh, in the upcoming election, they added.
Contacted, Nagorik Oikya Convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna said major issues of the unity process have already been settled, but did not elaborate.
A senior BNP leader held several meetings with the Democratic Left Alliance leaders over the unity process. But the Alliance said although they would join movement on any common issues, it would not be a part of the unity process.
"We will not form any alliance with the Awami League or the BNP. We the Democratic Left Alliance are with the movement on the issues of election under a nonpartisan government, dissolution of parliament and reconstitution of the Election Commission. Fair elections are not possible under any partisan government," said Mujahidul Islam Selim, president of the Communist Party of Bangladesh.

Frenchman at centre of Nobel scandal on trial for rape

AFP, Stockholm
The man at the centre of a sexual assault scandal that prompted the Swedish Academy to postpone this year's Nobel Literature Prize denied two counts of rape at the start of his trial yesterday.
Frenchman Jean-Claude Arnault was an influential figure on Stockholm's cultural scene for decades, until the explosive sexual assault accusations against Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein sparked a wave of similar allegations around the world.
Married to Katarina Frostenson, a member of the Swedish Academy which has been selecting Nobel literature laureates since 1901, Arnault ran the Forum club in Stockholm.
It was a key meeting place for the cultural elite and a popular spot among aspiring young authors hoping to make contact with publishers and writers.
The case against him erupted a month after the rape and sexual abuse accusations against Weinstein which sparked the worldwide #MeToo campaign.
Swedish daily Dagens Nyheter in November 2017 published testimonies of 18 women claiming to have been raped, sexually assaulted or harassed by Arnault.
Wearing a dark suit as he appeared in Stockholm's district court yesterday to face two charges of rape against one woman, Arnault's only comment to the media was "leave me alone".
"My client denies the charges," his lawyer Bjorn Hurtig told the court.
The judge then ruled the proceedings would be held behind closed doors, as is common in rape cases to protect the victim.
According to the charge sheet, a copy of which was obtained by AFP, the 72-year-old allegedly forced the victim -- who was in a state of "intense fear" -- to have oral sex and intercourse in a Stockholm apartment on October 5, 2011.
Arnault is also accused of raping her during the night of December 2-3 in the same apartment while she was asleep.
He faces up to six years in prison if found guilty.
The victim, whose identity has not been disclosed, entered the courtroom after the opening of the trial, coming face-to-face with Arnault, according to the daily Expressen.
The scandal rocked the Swedish Academy due to its long-standing and close ties to Arnault.

Australia considers targeted sanctions against Myanmar

ATROCITIES ON ROHINGYA
DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT
Australia is considering targeted sanctions in response to atrocities committed against the Rohingya in Rakhine state of Myanmar.
The country is preparing to act after the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission documented a series of atrocities committed against the ethnic minorities.
The Mission has recommended that Myanmar's top military generals be investigated for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.
"The full report of the fact-finding mission adds to a large body of evidence indicating the commission of the most serious crimes under international law, particularly against the Rohingya," Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne said.
"The Australian government is considering options in response to the fact-finding mission's report, including targeted sanctions," she said in a statement received from the Australian High Commission yesterday.
The report found instances of

Australia considers targeted sanctions against Myanmar

crimes against humanity and war crimes in Rakhine as well as sufficient evidence to warrant an investigation and prosecution for genocide perpetrated against the Rohingyas.
In line with the Mission's recommendations, Foreign Minister Payne said Australia would support new international efforts on accountability and justice in Myanmar, including at the UN Human Rights Council, of which Australia is a member.
The US, the UK and the European Union have all taken steps to suspend military cooperation with Myanmar.
Australia maintains an arms embargo, but rights groups are concerned the government continues to offer the Myanmar military support through humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping and English-language training.
There are more than 1.1 million forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals, known as Rohingyas, sheltered in Bangladesh. Of them, around 750,000 Rohingyas crossed the border following a brutal military crackdown since August 25, 2017.

Road Transport Bill

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The new law would replace the Motor Vehicles Ordinance, 1983.
In March last year, the cabinet approved in principle the proposed legislation -- Road Transport Act -- but it remained shelved at the law ministry for vetting amid opposition by transport owners and workers to some of its provisions.
The government recently decided to place the draft act before the cabinet following the recent student agitation for road safety sparked by the death of two college students on the road in July.
According to the law, if anybody causes an accident by reckless and negligent driving, and kills or injures someone seriously, such person would face a maximum sentence of five years in jail or a fine of Tk 5 lakh or both.
However, if it is found that a driver has deliberately killed anyone or not averted a killing in a road accident, the matter would fall under either section 302 (murder) or 304 (culpable homicide) of the Penal Code, according to the explanation of the proposed act by the law minister.
The maximum punishment under section 302 of the Penal Code is the death penalty while it is life imprisonment under section 304.
Road safety campaigners have long been demanding that the government increase the punishment to at least 10 years.
The act is rather soft on transport owners, as it holds drivers solely responsible for deaths and casualties in road crashes, the campaigners have been saying.
They have long been saying that it was impossible to ensure safe roads by letting the owners off the hook and punishing the workers or drivers alone.
"We think that transport owners have been exempted from shouldering certain liabilities because of lobbying and negotiations," Mozammel Hoque Chowdhury, secretary general of Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity, told

Shun burnt

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Alternative concrete blocks are made using modern technology without burning.
Citing official information, he said the country loses one percent agricultural land annually. As much as 80 percent of the loss is attributed to unplanned rural housing while over 17 percent to brick kilns.
The former HBRI director said around five crore people would face food shortage by 2050 when the country's population would reach 24.5 crore.
Sadeque said the country emits 80 million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually, of which 20 million tonnes is emitted by conventional brick kilns, including 7,900 registered ones. The number of unregistered conventional brick kilns is much higher than the registered ones.
According to him, 58 percent of air pollution in Dhaka comes from conventional brick kilns.
Md Abdul Awal, managing director of The Structural Engineers Limited, a real estate firm, said an estimated 240 million tonnes of coal dust is burnt to manufacture every one million pieces of bricks. He cited the data from the HBRI.
Prof Adil Mohammad Khan, general secretary of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, said loss of per hectare of fertile topsoil causes an economic loss of Tk 31 lakh.
Housing and Public Works Minister Mosharraf Hossain said operation of conventional brick kilns would be stopped by 2020 to save the country's agriculture.
He said the government should offer significant tax incentives to the prospective investors to promote manufacturing of alternative hollow blocks.
The minister mentioned that he would take steps to incorporate use of alternative bricks into a related law.
Nagar Unnayan Sangbadik Forum President Amitosh Pal chaired the discussion.

HC likely

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case filed under the controversial section 57 of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act for "spreading propaganda against the government".
Shahidul, 63, now in jail, submitted the application to the HC through his lawyers on September 18, saying he is ill and will not leave the country if he is granted bail.
In the petition, he also said the allegations brought against him in the case do not fall under section 57 of the ICT Act.
On September 10, Shahidul's lawyers moved another petition before the HC for his bail in the case filed by the police with Ramna Police Station on August 6.
After hearing the appeal, the HC bench of Justice Md Rezaul Haque and Justice Abu Taher Md Saifur Rahman directed the lower court to dispose of the bail application by September 11. The court concerned rejected the petition that day.
Shahidul, also founder of Drik Picture Library, was picked up by plainclothes men on August 5. Police filed the case against him and produced him before a Dhaka court the following day. He was then placed on a seven-day remand.
In court, Shahidul said he was tortured in custody. Police have denied this allegation.
On completion of his remand, Shahidul was denied bail and sent to jail by a Dhaka court on August 13.
On September 4, a judge of another HC bench felt "embarrassed" to hear Shahidul's bail petition in the case, and the bench forwarded the appeal to the chief justice for a decision. The bench, however, did not disclose any reason for this action.

A tweet that saves a family

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because they are not given proper safety equipment.
Shiv Sunny, a reporter at The Hindustan Times, who tweeted the picture on Monday, told the BBC that he was "shaken" by the sight of the man's grieving son, who is 11. "I am a crime reporter and I have seen a lot of tragedy. But this was something I had never seen."
Sunny said he took the photograph minutes before Anil, who only used one name, was cremated.
"I just wanted to draw attention to the deaths of sewer workers," Sunny said. "It [the photo] told the story of the family's plight."
He said the family could not even afford the cremation costs and had been helped by neighbours. They had also told him that Anil's four-month-old son had died a week earlier from pneumonia, as he did not have the money to buy medicines.
Anil also had two daughters, aged seven and three.
Sunny's tweet also drew attention to the Uday foundation, a non-governmental organisation that stepped in to raise funds with the help of Ketto, a crowdfunding platform.
And the response was tremendous.
"That was totally unexpected," Sunny said. He added that while even Bollywood actors reached out to him to ask how they could help Anil's family, what was really moving was that poorer people had donated sums of money as small as 10 rupees.
The numerous questions and comments about the family on social media prompted him to go back and find out more about them.
Sunny also spoke to the grieving son, who told him that he would sometimes accompany his father to work and "wait outside guarding his clothes and shoes from thieves".
"My father would say it still wasn't yet time for me to enter the sewers," Sunny quoted the boy as saying in the Hindustan Times.
Police told the NDTV news website that an investigation into Anil's death had revealed that the rope was not strong enough and that Anil had not been wearing protective gear. This is the

second incident involving the death of sewer workers in Delhi this month.
Five others died while cleaning a sewage treatment plant. Police alleged they were not carrying safety equipment and arrested their supervisor.
Sunny is hopeful that Anil's children will be able to go to school with the money that has been raised.
"With people offering to help, [they] may have a future now," Sunny said.

Former CJ 40 lakh

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Bangladesh, the separation of power and the independence of judiciary, 16th amendment to the constitution and its aftermath, ethical values of judges of the highest court and politicians, and the circumstances behind his resignation.
Justice Sinha, the 21st chief justice of the country, resigned on November 10 last year while he was abroad.
The first draft of the NRC for Assam was published on the intervening night of December 31 and January 1 in accordance with the top court's direction. Names of 1.9 crore people out of the 3.29 crore applicants were incorporated then.
Another contentious issue facing the centre is how to deal with D voters. In 1996, the Election Commission had declared around 1.8 lakh voters as doubtful.
"Some of these people have got favourable orders from courts to prove their citizenship and their applications would be processed," a home ministry officer had told NDTV, adding the figure has crossed 2 lakh in the last 22-odd years.
Assam, which had faced influx of people from Bangladesh since the early 20th century, is the only state having an NRC which was first prepared in 1951.
The latest updation of the list in Assam contains the names of descendants of those whose names were in the 1951 list, or those who were in Assam's Electoral rolls till March 24, 1971.

Air pollution linked to higher risk of dementia

AFP, Paris
Urban air pollution, mostly from vehicles, is associated with an increased risk of dementia, according to research published yesterday.
The link remained even after heavy drinking, smoking and other well established risk factors for dementia were ruled out, the researchers reported in medical journal BMJ Open.
Worldwide, about seven percent of people over 65 suffer from Alzheimer's or some form of dementia, a percentage that rises to 40 percent above the age of 85.

TIB expresses

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and unacceptable without taking into consideration of voters' preparation and examining necessary technical skill of Election Commission officials and those who will discharge election duties.
He said it had been seen that before the declaration of the 11th parliamentary election schedule, election campaign was being conducted, which is totally conflicting with the democratic culture of polls. "Silence of the Election Commission in this regard is disappointing."

India rout Pakistan

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46 as India romped home in 29 overs.
Ambati Rayudu and Dinesh Karthik both finished on 31 not out as India exacted some revenge for their humbling 180-run defeat against their arch-rivals in the final of the Champions Trophy in London last year -- the most recent match between the teams until Wednesday.
Both Pakistan and India had already qualified for the Super Four stage of the Asia Cup and will meet again in Dubai on Sunday.
Bangladesh and Afghanistan meet in Abu Dhabi in the last Group B match on Thursday, having already qualified for the second round after Sri Lanka crashed out.
The top two teams from the Super Fours will play the final in Dubai on September 28.
Once Pakistan's unpredictable batting crumbled, Wednesday's match turned into a damp squib for a near-capacity crowd comprising of Indian and Pakistani expats living in the United Arab Emirates.
Kumar ran through the top order by dismissing openers Imam-ul-Haq (two) and Fakhar Zaman (nought) inside five overs, before Babar Azam (47) and Shoaib Malik (43) rebuilt the innings during their 82-run stand for the third wicket.
But after Azam was dismissed in the 22nd over, bowled by left-arm spinner Kuldeep Yadav, Pakistan lost their last seven wickets for 77 runs.
Azam hit six boundaries in his 62-

ball knock while Malik, dropped on 26 by MS Dhoni off Hardik Pandya, cracked one six and one four in a vigilant innings which lasted 67 balls.
Skipper Sarfraz Ahmed (six) became Jadhav's first wicket, holing out to long-on where substitute fielder Maneesh Pandey completed a brilliant catch, throwing the ball back into the field to avoid running over the rope and completing the catch.
But it was Malik's run out which derailed Pakistan, sent back by Asif Ali after setting off for a quick single.
Paceman Jasprit Bumrah took 2-23 but India lost all-rounder Hardik Pandya to injury.
Bowling his fifth over, Pandya fell in his follow through and was stretched off with a lower back injury, the extent of which was being assessed by the India team's medical staff.

Landlord

FROM PAGE 2
so close to the sub-station, but he didn't listen, the officer added.
The OC said, Jahangir was killed after he came in contact with a 30,000-volt wire.
Asked why police rented a flat on such a "risky" building, the OC said officers were in a hurry and could not check everything.
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Sunday inaugurated via video conference the Gazipur Metropolitan Police with seven police stations, including the one in Pubail.