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# It's against constitution

Shafi's comment on girls' education triggers outrage

**"Islam never prohibits anyone from receiving the highest education maintaining decency."**

MAULANA FARID UDDIN MASOUD

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Politicians, rights activists and academics have demanded steps against Shah Ahmed Shafi for his comment on girls' education as they find it conflicting with the spirit of the Liberation War and the constitution.

Addressing a rally in Chattogram on Friday, the Hefajat-e Islam supremo made parents promise that they won't send their daughters to school.

"At most, you can allow them to study up to class IV or V, so that they can maintain their husbands' accounts and can write letters to them," he further said, igniting a firestorm of protests from various quarters including social media users.

The 99-year-old Islamist is no stranger to making outright vulgar remarks about women. In 2013, he compared women with tamarind, a fruit that, according to him, would make any man salivate.

Rights activist Sultana Kamal yesterday said the Hefajat chief's comment goes against the constitution and poses a challenge for the government in fulfilling its pledge of empowering women.

"The government should face the challenge," she said, adding, "It is the government's responsibility to take steps in line with its policy on anti-constitutional statements."

Former Dhaka University vice-chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique said it is unbelievable that someone made such a comment in this twenty first century.

"I don't understand how a religious leader can talk about keeping women confined denying them fundamental and constitutional rights."

Maulana Farid Uddin Masoud mentions that men and women have equal rights to education in Islam.

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A train leaving Dhaka goes past the wreckage of a truck that was hit by another train when the truck stalled on the railway tracks in Moghbazar area yesterday morning. No one was hurt in the incident but trains to and from Kamalapur had to use one line until 11:00am. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Road transport act in force now Quader says; his remark seems at odds with new law

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said the Road Transport Act-2018 would come into force "right now", an assertion that contradicts the act.

As per section 1(2) of the act, the government must issue a gazette notification mentioning when the law would come into force.

But the government has not issued the gazette even in four months after parliament passed the act.

Quader, however, said there was no need to issue a gazette to put the law into effect.

The minister told reporters after visiting two mobile courts of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) in the capital's Manik Mia Avenue that the two mobile courts filed 42 cases, jailed three and realised Tk 98,000 in fines in just two hours.

"The BRTA had suspended its drives due to the election. As a result, the irregularities have increased," said Quader, also the

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**DEFAULTED LOANS**  
Pvt banks to devise new strategies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Private commercial banks will set fresh strategies to curb the rising defaulted loans in the banking sector.

The decision was taken yesterday at a joint meeting organised by the Bangladesh Association of Banks (BAB), a platform of sponsors of private banks, and the Association of Bankers, Bangladesh (ABB), an organisation of managing directors of private lenders.

ABB Chairman Syed Mahbubur Rahman has been assigned to prepare a "working paper" within the next 10 days on how to recover defaulted loans, said meeting sources.

Rahman, also managing director of Dhaka Bank, will make the report in consultation with top executives of banks.

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## DELTA PLAN 2100 Taken up without enough study

*Says river conservation commission chief, doubts if scheme to have expected result*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The newly adopted Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 was not prepared following adequate studies and consultation with relevant stakeholders, National River Conservation Commission (NRCC) Chairman Muzibur Rahman Howlader said yesterday.

Speaking at a conference in the capital, he also said he doubted if the mega government scheme for ensuring food and water security and fighting disasters through water resource management would yield the expected outcome.

Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa) and Bangladesh Environment Network (BEN), in association with 40 other green organisations of the country, organised the special conference, titled "Delta Plan 2100 and Sustainable Development in Bangladesh" at the KIB to review the scheme and come up with recommendations.

"I think the delta plan was not taken up after consultation with the people involved with it ... although it has been approved by the prime minister," Muzibur said.

"I have no idea how much opportunities and benefits it [the plan] will bring for us ... We have to work on it," he said, adding that no hydromorphological study was conducted for the mega project.

Fixing these things and further research are needed for the implementation, he said.

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**Italian restaurant serves 'fried air'**



ODDITY CENTRAL ONLINE

A restaurant in the Italian town of Castelfranco Veneto has come up with an ingenious way to get a leg up on the competition – treating guests to a unique dish called "fried air".

Nicola Dinato, the head chef at Feva Restaurant wanted to capture the essence of being outdoors and breathing fresh air in a dish aptly called "aria fritta" or "fried air".

The name is a tad misleading, as the crispy treats are actually made of tapioca skin that's first baked and then deep fried. However, there's some air involved in the cooking process as well, or at least a component of it – ozone. After the tapioca skin is baked and fried, it is infused with ozone for 10 minutes, which gives the treats a special perfume.

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Turn in wealth info by Feb 28

Land minister to ministry staff

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Land Minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury yesterday said all the staff members of the land offices would have to submit their wealth statements by February 28.

The newly appointed minister made the announcement while attending a view exchange meeting with journalists in Chattogram Press Club.

"All the staff members of

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PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 13

Fazr Zohr Asr Magrib Esha  
AZAN 5-30 12-45 4-00 5-36 7-00  
JAMAAT 6-05 1-15 4-15 5-40 7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## Fog disrupts ferry services

Thousands suffer

STAR REPORT

Several thousand passengers on Paturia-Daulatdia and Shimulia-Kathalbari ferry routes were stuck for several hours on both sides of the Padma due to dense fog yesterday.

Passengers, especially women and children, suffered badly due to the disruption in the chilly weather, which eventually resulted in traffic jams on both routes, report our correspondents.

Ferry services on Paturia-Daulatdia route remained suspended for three hours from early morning.

Shafiqul Islam, manager of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) at Daulatdia, said ferry operation on the route remained suspended since 6:00am.

Five ferries were forced to anchor in the middle of the river, while six remained stranded in each of the two points due to poor visibility, he added.

Around 150 vehicles

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Buses stand in a queue near Paturia Ghat in Manikganj yesterday. Dense fog disrupted ferry operations on the Paturia-Daulatdia route for three hours since 6:00am, causing long tailbacks on both sides of the Padma.

## US in longest govt shutdown

Trump says not in a rush to declare emergency in border wall fight

AFP, Washington

The US government shutdown that has left 800,000 federal employees without salaries as a result of President Donald Trump's row with Democrats over building a Mexico border wall entered a record 22nd day Saturday.

The Democrats' refusal to approve \$5.7 billion demanded by Trump for the wall project has paralyzed Washington, with the president retaliating by refusing to sign off on budgets for swaths of government departments unrelated to the dispute.

As a result, workers as diverse as FBI agents, air traffic controllers and museum staff, did not receive paychecks Friday.

The partial shutdown of the government became the longest on record at midnight Friday (0500 GMT Saturday), when it overtook the 21-day stretch in 1995-1996, under president Bill Clinton.

Trump on Friday backed off a series of previous threats to end the deadlock by declaring a national emergency and attempting to secure the funds without congressional approval.

"I'm not going to do it so fast," he said at a White House meeting.

Trump described an emergency declaration as the "easy way out" and said Congress had to step up to the responsibility of approving the \$5.7 billion.

"If they can't do it... I will declare a national emergency. I have the absolute right," he insisted.

Until now, Trump had suggested numerous times that he was getting closer to taking the controversial decision.

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