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Your Right to Know

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"There is no scope for denying that we have failed to bring discipline to the transport sector."

ASADUZZAMAN MIA, DMP COMMISSIONER AT A PROGRAMME AT MOHANAGAR NATYA MANCHA IN THE CAPITAL



"I fear if the voters lose interest in elections, democracy will be in serious danger. Nothing can be more alarming than voters' apathy."

AOM BADRUDDOZA CHOWDHURY, JUKTAFRONT CHAIRMAN (PAGE 2)



"In the event of another no vote in Britain, we will be heading towards a no deal [Brexit]."

EMMANUEL MACRON, FRENCH PRESIDENT PUTTING PRESURE ON UK MPs BEFORE ANOTHER VOTE (PAGE 7)

Farmland turns WASTELAND

Industrial pollution, Chittagong Development Authority to blame

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Ctg

Selim Uddin, 50, had been a farmer all his life like his father and his father before him. Until a few years ago, he earned his living by farming on a small piece of land and fishing in canals in and around his South Madrasa union in Chittagong's Hathazari upazila.

But massive industrial pollution has changed all that not only for him, but for hundreds of other farmers as well.

Over the last few years, industrial waste has turned huge swaths of arable land into wasteland, forcing Selim and others to turn to other less secure professions such as day labourers.

Official data is not available, but local public representatives and surveyors estimate that farming on some 3,000 acres of land in three unions of the upazila have been affected by the pollution. Now instead of seedlings only shrubs grow on those land.

The factory waste coming from Bayezid area has also polluted at least seven canals that run through these unions -- Shikarpur, Burishor and South Madrasa.

Only a few years ago, farmers would use the waters for irrigation. But that's a story of the past.

"The canals and the land have been polluted in front of our eyes. We have been protesting and urging the authorities to stop the pollution for many years now. But no one listened," said a visibly frustrated Selim, who now works as a mason.

The three unions have a population of about 1 lakh, and a large number of them have been affected one way or the

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Murky water at the confluence of the Halda river and Khondokia Canal in Chattogram recently. Unabated dumping of industrial waste made the river water so polluted that fish cannot survive in it.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Big industries killing Halda

Govt probe finds; Ctg DoE sits idle for nearly 2yrs

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Ctg

Waste from large factories and a housing estate are polluting the Halda river in Chattogram to the extent that it caused fish die-offs, according to a report of the Department of Environment.

The pollution of the Halda, the only place in the country from where naturally laid carp eggs are collected for hatching, has led to at least 250 fishermen losing their livelihood.

After a large number of dead fish and aquatic mammals were found floating in the river in June last year, the DoE launched a probe and found Anannya Housing Estate, Abul Khair Consumer Goods, KDS Textile Mills Ltd, Madina Tannery, and Hathazari 100MW Peaking Power Plant directly responsible for polluting the river.

Earlier in September 2017, the DoE asked its

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No retreat

Students fear their demands won't be met if they leave street

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Student demonstrators yesterday said they would resume their peaceful protest for safe roads on Sunday to keep pressure on the authorities to implement their promises.

They made the announcement at a human chain programme on Pragati Sarani near the city's Bashundhara Residential Area.

"If we postpone demonstrations, our demands will not be met," said a student of American International University of Bangladesh, wishing not to be named.

In August last year, students across the country waged an unprecedented movement, demanding safe roads following the deaths of college students Dia Khanam Mim and Abdul Karim Rajib in a road crash in the capital.

Around 12:30pm yesterday, over 100 students from different universities formed the human chain near the spot where Abrar Ahmed, student of Bangladesh University of Professionals, was run over and killed by a bus three days ago.

Some 100 policemen were deployed in the area to avoid any untoward incident.

Protesters said they would be watching

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Running without route permit!

Suprobhat Paribahan bus involved in Tuesday's accident was not allowed to ply city roads

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The bus of Suprobhat Paribahan, which ran over and killed a university student in the capital's Bashundhara Residential Area on Tuesday, faced legal actions 27 times and plied Pragati Sarani road for long without the authorities' permission.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia disclosed this at a programme organised by the traffic police (east division) at Mohanagar Natya Mancha in the city's Gulistan area yesterday.

"The bus had permission to ply Dhaka-Brahmanbaria road. Then how did it run in Dhaka city? The second thing is the bus faced legal actions 27 times..." the commissioner said.

There have been widespread allegations that despite having no fitness certificates and route permits, a large number of buses are running on the city streets by bribing a section of traffic sergeants.

A portion of the bribe, given by bus owners on a monthly basis, goes to a section of police high-ups and some political leaders, several police officials, who had worked in the traffic division in the past, told this newspaper.

Asaduzzaman said police, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), and other organisations related to traffic management system have failed to bring discipline to the roads and cannot shrug off responsibility.

"There is no scope for denying that we have failed to bring discipline to the transport sector," he said.

Referring to the death of Abrar Ahmed Chowdhury, a student of

STORY ON ROAD ACCIDENTS - PAGE 18

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Police probe attacks on 5 UK mosques

AGENCIES

Five mosques in the central English city of Birmingham have been targeted in a string of violent attacks overnight and into the morning, the police said yesterday.

Reports of a man smashing windows with a sledgehammer on Birchfield Road were received at 02:30 GMT, BBC reported quoting police.

Counter-terrorism officers are investigating attacks on the mosques in five different areas in the north of the city, West Midlands Police said in a statement.

The force added the incidents "are being treated as linked".

"At the moment we don't know the motive for last night's attacks," said Chief Constable Dave Thompson in a statement.

"What I can say is that

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NZ imposes ban on assault guns

PM announces sweeping gun law changes; thousands stage silent march for mosque attack victims

AFP, Christchurch

New Zealand imposed a ban on assault weapons yesterday, moving swiftly following the Christchurch massacre and triggering renewed calls from leading American politicians for gun controls in the United States.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said assault rifles and semi-automatic weapons were now banned with immediate effect, making good on a pledge to the country of the military-style weapons used in last week's slaughter of 50 people.

The killings at two Christchurch mosques by an Australian white supremacist have caused national soul-searching over New Zealand's lax gun laws.

But the crackdown promises to have political repercussions beyond the country's shores, including in the United States where gun control is one of the most divisive national political issues.

"In short, every semi-automatic weapon used in the terrorist attack on Friday will be banned in this country," Ardern said.

She added that high-capacity magazines and devices similar to bump stocks -- which allow users to fire weapons

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MARCH 22, 1971

The sixth meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After holding a meeting with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Pakistan president Yahya Khan postponed the March 25 session of the National Assembly saying it was deferred to create unity among the political parties.

"Political crisis will be resolved," said Yahya Khan in a message.

In the morning, Bangabandhu, Yahya and Pakistan People's Party chief Zulfikar Ali Bhutto sat in a meeting at the president's residence.

The sixth meeting between the president and

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A flower placed into the butt of a policeman's rifle on Pragati Sarani near Bashundhara Residential Area yesterday. A group of students was staging a human chain on the pavement there, as part of their peaceful protests for road safety. On Tuesday, Abrar Ahmed Chowdhury, a university student, was run over and killed by a reckless bus in the area.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

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