



Clockwise from left, students bring out a procession yesterday inside the campus, paint the streets with their demands, and lock the main gate of the university, boycotting classes and exams -- to press home their 16-point demand.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Buet students lock out classrooms

Demos enter 4th day; VC stays mum

DU CORRESPONDENT

Students of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) continued their agitation for the fourth straight day yesterday, to press home their 16-point demand including infrastructural development of residential halls.

The aggrieved students boycotted all classes and examinations as part of their protest, and locked the main gate and classrooms of the university.

About 400 students started to gather at the base of the university Shaheed Minar around 11am. Afterwards, they also brought out a procession on the campus. The protesters then demonstrated till 2:30pm, blocking the road.

Talking to The Daily Star, Hasan Sarowar Shaikat, a student mechanical engineering department, alleged that the authorities are not paying heed to their demands even though the students have notified them several times. "We will not attend classes and examinations until our demands are met. We do not want verbal assurance, but implementation of our demands."

Buet Vice-Chancellor Prof Saiful Islam did not pick up his phone, despite repeated calls.

Students have been demonstrating since Saturday to realise demands, including formation of a special committee comprising teachers of civil engineering and architecture departments to build the Buet gate, introducing teacher evaluation system, digitalising students' payment process and increasing allocation in research sector.

## Take measures to realise bad loans

Lawmakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Strong measures have to be taken to realise defaulted loans and control scope for whitening black money and siphoning off those abroad, demanded lawmakers yesterday.

While taking part in a general discussion on the proposed budget at the parliament, they urged the government to make Bangladesh Bank officials accountable for the heist in the central bank and widening the tax net.

Members of parliament on opening day of the discussion also urged the government to recognise the contribution of women's unpaid work to the economy and take concrete steps to include it in the national GDP estimation.

Workers Party of Bangladesh MP Lutfun Nesa Khan said it is high time to recognise women's unpaid work. "Increase stipend amount for female students to reduce their dropout rate," she said, adding that allocation for research in higher education was not sufficient.

She alleged that the government-run drug rehabilitation centres were in a bad shape while the private ones are too

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## DHAKA ELEVATED EXPRESSWAY Airport-Moghbazar to open by December 2020: Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A part of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway -- stretching from Airport to Moghbazar -- will be opened by December 2020 after the second phase of public-private partnership project (PPP) is completed, said Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday.

He said construction work of its first phase -- Airport to Banani Rail Crossing -- will be completed by January next year, while the second phase, from Banani Rail Crossing to Moghbazar, will be finished by December 2020.

The entire work of the project would be completed within March 2022, Quader said while visiting the construction site of the project at Kaola. The original deadline for the project was 2020.

After over seven years of toiling exercises of preparatory work, construction of the much-talked about 47km Dhaka Elevated Expressway with 19.73km main

line commenced formally on April 1, 2018.

The bridge authorities signed a deal with Italian-Thai Development Public Company in January 2011 to build the expressway stretching from Shahjalal International Airport to Kutubkhali on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway, under public-private-partnership at a cost of Tk 8,703 crore.

The deal was revised and signed again in December 2013, with the cost revised at Tk 8,940 crore and incorporating alteration to a four-kilometre alignment in the southern end of the project to avoid land acquisition.

The government is to spend Tk 4,885 crore on land acquisition, resettlement and relocation of utility service lines. Therefore, the total cost of the project would come up to Tk 13,825 crore. The main objective of the project is to bypass Dhaka vertically in the fastest possible way, which would significantly reduce the traffic load

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## Hilsa production increased 2.5 times

State minister informs parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hilsa production has increased by more than two and a half fold in the last 15 years due to various efforts of the government including imposing ban on catching brood hilsa and jatka (hilsa fry), State Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Ashraf Ali Khan Khasru informed parliament yesterday.

In 2017-18, hilsa production stood at 5.17 lakh tonnes, up from 1.99 lakh tonnes in 2002-03, the state minister said while answering a query from ruling party lawmaker Abdul Latif.

Khasru said market price of total 5.17 lakh tonnes hilsa will be around Tk 20,000 crore if price of one kilogramme hilsa was Tk 400.

The question-answer session was tabled at onset of the day's proceedings.

The state minister said Bangladesh's hilsa management policy has become a model, and India and Myanmar are following it. He hoped that the total production of hilsa will cross 5.5 lakh tonnes in the next five years.

While answering another question from lawmaker Manjur Hossain, Khasru said 38,571 tonnes of dried fish

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## Over 35 lakh cases pending in courts

Law minister tells House

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than 35.82 lakh cases are now pending with the higher and lower courts across the country, according to statistics placed by Law Minister Anisul Huq in the parliament yesterday.

"The total number of cases pending with the country's higher and lower courts is 35,82,347 till March 31," the minister said, in reply to a question from treasury bench MP Habiba Rahman Khan.

The question-answer session was tabled at the beginning of day's proceedings at the House.

The minister said the government has taken measures like increasing the number of judges and resolving the crisis of court rooms for quick disposal of the huge number of cases.

Anisul said 13.28 lakh civil and 17.25 lakh criminal cases are pending with lower courts. Also, 96,114 civil and 3.17 lakh criminal cases, and 93,107 petitions are

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## ROOPPUR POWER PLANT JS committee irked over purchase 'irregularities'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parliamentary standing committee on the Ministry of Science and Technology yesterday expressed dissatisfaction over irregularities in purchasing furniture and other household products for officials and employees of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant in Pabna.

AFM Ruhul Haque, chairman of the committee, from a meeting at parliament complex asked the ministry to check recurrence of such anomalies in future, said a statement of parliament secretariat.

According to meeting sources, committee member M Habibe Millat raised the issue saying that the government was embarrassed by the alleged irregularities. Later, Ruhul asked Science and Technology Minister Yeafesh Osman and

ministry Secretary M Anwar Hossain to explain the matter.

The committee also sought explanation as to why the ministry failed to monitor the anomalies.

Responding to the query, the ministry representatives said they did not monitor the project as the Public Works Department was assigned to conduct the work related to the purchase.

They also informed that the authorities concerned have formed two probe committees in this regard.

Earlier on Monday, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina informed the House that the person involved in the alleged corruption in buying "pillows and other household items" for the power plant's residential area had been involved with Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, a

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## DHAKA TODAY

PHOTO EXHIBITION

Brattyajan - The Lower Depths  
Venue: Drik Gallery  
Time: 3pm

Venue: Shilpakala Academy  
Time: 7pm

FILM SCREENING

Observing World Refugee Day  
Venue: Shawkat Osman Hall,  
Central Public Library, Shahbagh  
Time: 9am

FAIR  
SRHR and Nutrition Collaboration Fair  
Bringing together organisations and individuals working for women's wellbeing.  
Venue: Spectra Convention Center, Gulshan 1  
Time: 2:30pm

THEATRE

Draupadi Parampara

আমাদের নাতিক  
সংস্কোচ প্রকাশের দুঃস্বপ্নে  
মহাভারতে দ্রৌপদীর না বলা  
অভিন্ন সত্তা কখনের দুঃস্বপ্নের আদায়

বিয়ের প্রযোজনা-৪০

**দ্রৌপদী**  
পরম্পরা

রচনা ও নির্দেশনা: প্রবীর দত্ত

## WAR CRIMES SC begins hearing on appeal of Azharul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After more than three years, the Supreme Court yesterday began hearing on an appeal in connection with a war crimes case.

The apex court started hearing on the appeal filed by former Jamaat-e-Islami leader ATM Azharul Islam against the death penalty given to him by a war crimes tribunal.

A four-member bench of the Appellate Division of the SC, headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain yesterday set today for resuming the hearing.

At the start, Azhar's lawyer Advocate Joynal Abedin Tuhin read out from the paper book of the case before the SC.

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 on

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## PHOTO OF THE DAY

COLLECTED



A petrol pump of a filling station caught fire in Kalyanpur area yesterday. The fire started around 5:25pm while fuel was being unloaded from a tanker. Ten firefighting units extinguished the blaze around 6:12pm. No casualty was reported. The damage was estimated to be around Tk 10 lakh.

## 'Playgrounds are like the lungs of a city'

Experts urge to build a better Dhaka for children

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Children's interests must be at the heart of city planning, policymakers and experts said yesterday in presence of some 700 young minds -- secondary and higher secondary level students from different educational institutions across Dhaka and Narayanganj.

Save the Children, Bangladesh Institute of Planners and Social and Economic Enhancement Programme jointly organised the daylong conference at Krishibid Institution auditorium, with a view to ensuring cleaner, greener and safer city for children, who -- according to organisers -- constitute around half of the country's 4.27 crore urban population.

Architect Iqbal Habib and city planner Adil Mohammad Khan presented two separate keynotes on children's right to play, and child-friendly urban spaces.

Referring to a study in the capital, Iqbal Habib said that some 25 percent children have lost their full lung capacity. "It is urgent to develop the city maintaining a proper ecosystem. Adequate greenery, playgrounds, wetlands -- these are the core criteria to make the city environment-friendly."

He proposed making tree plantation mandatory in every building of the city, and tax exemption incentives for doing so.

In his presentation, Adil Mohammad Khan noted that there are correlations between teenage crimes and playground facilities for teens. "Playground is a part of health-infrastructure; it works as the lungs of an over-crowded city."

People of 84 percent areas of Dhaka city (as of 90 wards of undivided Dhaka city) are deprived of open playground facility, he said, adding that there is only one square feet open space (playground, parks, walking space etc) for each Dhaka city dweller.

There should be at least nine square feet of open space for every citizen on an average, according to World Health Organization standards, he said.

Of the 235 playgrounds or open spaces, only 42 are open to the public in the city, Adil also said. "If there is plan, it is possible to create playgrounds at walking distance for everybody within ten years. There needs to be a movement to free playgrounds from occupation."

Addressing the event as chief guest,

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