



Although Tuesday's accident at Azimpur -- which killed schoolboy Zihad Hossain after a wall collapsed on him -- captured the public's attention, this has been a long-standing problem all across the city. For example, right beside Azimpur at Palashi Residential Area, there are similar tilted walls, which might collapse anytime and spell disaster for unsuspecting pedestrians. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## No more seating service buses

Transport owners to implement decision from Sunday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than four and a half years after a failed attempt to stop operation of "seating service" buses in Dhaka city, bus owners have decided to give a crack at it again.

Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association yesterday said it would get rid of the seating and gate-locking service within the next three days, in a bid to stop overcharging passengers.

Seating service buses do not take standing passengers. After all the seats are occupied, helpers lock the gate. Such buses also take higher fares from commuters.

"We are receiving some allegations over seating and gate-locking service... So, bus owners must remove notices of such services plastered on the vehicles in the next three days," said Khandaker Enayet Ullah, secretary general of the association.

"The [service] is not legal... If anyone operates buses like this after the deadline, we will ask BRTA [Bangladesh Road Transport Authority] to dump the buses through executive magistrates," he said.

Enayet also said they would put stickers on buses in the next three



days to differentiate between CNG and diesel-run buses. CNG-buses are not supposed to charge according to the new rate.

The association will form 11 vigilance teams, which will work with mobile courts of BRTA and Dhaka Metropolitan Police from today, so that no bus operator can overcharge

passengers. Enayet was speaking at a press conference organised by his association and Bangladesh Road Transport Workers' Federation, amid major allegations of bus operators overcharging in Dhaka and Chattogram.

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## Train fare to remain same, for now

Says railways minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although Bangladesh Railway (BR) will incur more losses due to the fuel price hike, its authorities will not increase railway fare for now, considering public opinion.

"We are not considering to raise train fare for now," Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujon told The Daily Star yesterday.

However, authorities have asked BR to assess the impact of the fuel price hike on railway operations, Sujon said.

On November 3, the government hiked diesel and kerosene prices by 23 percent, or by Tk 15 per litre, to cut losses

The matter is not that the railway was making profits anyway, and the rise of fuel prices will force it to incur losses. We, however, have asked [authorities concerned] to assess how much more losses we will have to incur due to the hike.

**NURUL ISLAM SUJON**  
Railways Minister

of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, following the global rise of fuel prices.

After the strike of transport associations centring the hike, the government on Sunday raised bus and launch fares by up to 28 and 43 percent, respectively.

BR sources said trains are facing a huge pressure of passengers, after the hike of bus fare, which is likely to increase in the coming days, creating trouble for the railway.

Trains are run by diesel-run locomotives, so the operation cost of BR will increase further, which will ultimately increase

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## Tk 945cr project to save 4 canals awaits approval: Taposh

BSS, Dhaka

A Tk 945-crore project taken by Dhaka South City Corporation to re-excavate and protect four major canals and its seven branches from encroachment awaits government approval, said DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday.

"We have taken the project to re-excavate, preserve and protect Shyampur, Jirani, Manda and Kalunagar canals and its seven branches," said the mayor during an interview with the news agency at his Nagar Bhaban office in Dhaka.

A proposal titled "Canal Restoration, Renovation and Aesthetic Environment Creation Project" is now awaiting approval of the planning commission, he said.

Taposh said necessary measures will be taken to keep the water-flow normal in the canals and its branches round the year.

The canals will be given a facelift, after necessary infrastructure including parks and roads are built, keeping the natural beauty and environment in mind, he added.

The mayor further said DSCC will continue mobile

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## How to select an election commissioner

Shujon places draft of proposed law

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujon) yesterday placed the final draft of the proposed law on "Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioner's Appointment Act 2021."

The civil society platform said they will hand over the draft to Law Minister Anisul Haq soon, in a bid to help the government enact the much awaited law.

Shujon placed the draft of the law through a webinar.

According to the draft, selected citizens of Bangladesh -- with a minimum age of 45 years, knowledge of law with proven administrative skills, honesty and supposed impartiality, holding a minimum bachelor degree from a recognised university, and at least 20 years working experience in any

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### DRAFT AT A GLANCE

- Any citizens (min age 45) with certain qualifications will be eligible to be EC
- Search committee to consist of 7 members, with at least one woman
- Preliminary list to have min 15, max 20 persons, including at least 5 women
- President will make final appointment

The last two ECs utterly failed to perform their functions properly. The government is tricking people when it comes to forming a search committee to appoint CEC and ECs.

SHAHDEEN MALIK

## Dengue cases cross 25,000 mark

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of dengue patients this year has crossed the 25,000 mark yesterday.

Meanwhile, at least 163 patients were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till 8am yesterday of whom 32 are from outside Dhaka, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With the new cases, a total of 1,410 were diagnosed during the running month out of a total 25,065 infected. Of the total infected, 3734 are from outside Dhaka.

At least 5,458 were diagnosed in October, 7,841 in September, 7,698

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With winter rolling out, traders of all scales have started to bring out their stock of blankets. At this wholesale market at Fulbaria, near the capital's Gulistan area, blankets of all shapes and sizes are sold to retailers, at all price levels -- from Tk 300 all the way up to Tk 10,000. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Control prices, BNP urges govt

UNB, Dhaka

BNP standing committee has demanded that the government lower prices of diesel, kerosene and LPG, considering public sufferings.

At a virtual meeting on Monday night, the BNP policymaking body also urged the government to take prompt, effective steps to lower prices of daily essentials, including rice, pulses, edible oil and salt.

The meeting discussed the overall impact of the fuel price hike on citizens' lives and the economy, said a press release signed by BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday.

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## Democracy yet to get institutional shape

Says Obaidul Quader marking Noor Hossain Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said democracy is yet to get an institutional shape in Bangladesh.

"Our democracy was unshackled on this day (November 10, 1987), but democracy is yet to get an institutional shape to this day," he said.

"The sacrifice of Noor Hossain is a glorious milestone in our history. Our long-cherished democracy was set free in exchange of his blood, along with the tough movement waged under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina," he said.

The road transport and bridges minister came up with the remark while talking to reporters after paying homage at Shaheed Noor Hossain Square in the capital yesterday morning, on the occasion of Noor Hossain Day.

On this day in 1987, Noor Hossain, a young pro-democracy activist, was killed in police fire near Zero Point in the city while participating in a pro-democracy procession to oust the autocratic regime of HM Ershad.

His death strengthened the movement and expedited

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## Five die as truck, auto-rickshaw collide

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Five people died and two others sustained injuries in a collision between a truck and an auto-rickshaw on Trishal-Balipara road in Mymensingh yesterday morning.

The deceased are Abdus Sattar (40), CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver, and four passengers -- Md Kalimuddin, (85), Mina Akter (45), Salam Nabi (35), and Sohrab Uddin (50), hailing from different villages of Trishal upazila.

Quoting witnesses and locals, Trishal Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mohammad Mainuddin said the accident took place in

Rampur area around 9am.

Abdus Sattar and Kalimuddin died on the spot and five others sustained injuries, the OC said.

On information, police and fire service personnel rushed to the spot, rescued the injured, including nine-year-old Rony Mia, and took them to Trishal Upazila Health Complex, the police official said.

Later, they were transferred to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital where Mina, Nabi and Sohrab died, he added.

Their bodies were handed over to their family members, said the OC, adding that police seized the truck but the driver managed to flee.



The mangled auto-rickshaw after the collision on Trishal-Balipara road in Mymensingh.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Shipbreaking yard owners on 'indefinite strike'

VAT commissionerate conducts drive at Sitakunda over evasion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Shipbreaking yard owners enforced an indefinite strike yesterday morning after Customs, Excise and VAT Commissionerate in a drive seized documents from at least four yards in Sitakunda of Chattogram on charge of evading VAT.

The papers of Vatiari Steel Shipbreaking Yard, Premier Trade Corporation, Mahinur Shipbreaking Yard and SN Corporation were seized during the drive between Tuesday afternoon and 8:30pm.

"All of our associations pay VAT. No question of VAT evasion was raised before. On Tuesday, our papers were seized for the first time. Protesting it, we have suspended all operations in Sitakunda shipbreaking yards," Nazmul Islam, assistant secretary of Bangladesh Ship Breakers and Recyclers Association (BSBRA), told The Daily Star.

Contacted, Customs, Excise and VAT Commissioner of Chattogram Akbar Hossain said, "Sometimes, we seize documents for conducting organisational audit if we receive any VAT evasion complaint. It's part of our regular job. The papers have been seized following law."

"We didn't create any obstacle in operations. We have started investigation

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