

Shahana Khan passes away

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agencies, is constructing a 10-lane bridge over Tongi canal.

The government is supposed to tear down the two old bridges, as they are relatively low and do not comply with the vertical limit prescribed by Bangladesh Inland Water Development Authority.

"Steel plates were put on the oldest bridge around two months ago, when the damage surfaced, to keep it functional," said Mohirul Islam Khan, project director (of the BBA part).

"But, operation of vehicles dislodged the plates and caused further damage, leaving us with no alternative but to repair the slab," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

He, however, said the damaged bridge's main structure is in good shape. The problem

was only with the slab.

Shafiqul Islam, managing director of Dhaka BRT Company Ltd, also said they kept the bridge operational by putting steel plates.

Roads and Highways Department (RHD) Chief Engineer Abdus Sabur, who visited the site yesterday, said it would take eight to 10 days to complete repair work.

He said although the bridge belongs to RHD, BBA is supposed to maintain it, as they are implementing a part of the BRT project.

Replying to a question, he said, "A minor repair work was done earlier, but it was not enough. So, they have to do some work again."

Asked whether the old bridge was not maintained properly,

as it would be torn down after opening the new one, he said, "It may be a reason."

He said authorities have arranged for alternative routes to reduce traffic gridlock on the major highway.

BBA Executive Director Abu Bakr Siddique, also the Bridge Division's secretary, echoed the RHD chief engineer, saying that the plan to dismantle the old bridges may be the reason behind the lack of proper maintenance.

He, however, said: "We are now working to fix it and hope to complete work within a week."

Meanwhile, due to the situation, travellers are choosing trains to reach their destination, which is putting additional pressure on the railway, according to The Daily Star's Gazipur correspondent.

Around 50 representatives -- including from the UK, US, China, Australia and India -- will attend the event.

IORA meeting begins tomorrow

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

UK Minister Lord Tariq Ahmad and US Deputy-Assistant Secretary Kelly Keiderling are among a number of delegates who will be visiting Bangladesh to attend the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) meeting beginning tomorrow.

Bangladesh, the upcoming chair of IORA, will be hosting the 21st IORA Council of Ministers' Meeting on November 17 and the 23rd committee of senior officials and its related meetings from November 15 to 16.

IORA is an inter-governmental organisation aimed at strengthening regional cooperation and sustainable development within the Indian Ocean region through its 23 member states and nine dialogue partners.

Asked whether the old bridge was not maintained properly,

Don't leave your

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Junaed Alam Sharker, additional deputy commissioner of DB's cyber and special crime division, said the arrestees were involved with fraudulent activities for the last one and half years.

"Juwel and Emon used to pay Tk 300 to 400 to Tutul for providing them with passport applicants' details. They would then collect Tk 500 to Tk 1,500 from the applicants in the name of verification, after identifying themselves as SB officials," he said.

Junaed said Tutul would make copies of the applications and drop them from one of the windows at the back of the passport office. Juwel, who knows the ins and outs of the building, would later collect those documents, said DB officials.

"While analysing the account history of the arrestees, we found around Tk 26,560 worth of transaction in a single month in Emon's mobile financial account, while Juwel has a transaction history of Tk 3.06 lakh in the last five months," said ADC Junaed.

"We are trying to find out whether any passport officials were involved with the process," said the official.

Junaed further said they will send a letter to the passport office to inform them about the crime committed by non-permanent workers who work at the office on a temporary basis. However, talking to this newspaper, Shihab Uddin Khan, director (admin and finance) of the department of immigration and passport, said he is not aware of the incident yet.

2.85 lakh fire incidents

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As recently as in 2020, 21,073 fire incidents were recorded, which was the second highest of the period, only coming second to 2019, which saw 24,074.

Experts attributed this rise in fire incidents to unplanned urbanisation, violation of building construction rules, a culture of non-enforcement of the law, carelessness, increased use of gas cylinders and different electronic devices, and lack of supervision by the authorities concerned.

As a remedy, they suggested urgent initiatives to ensure safety compliance of city establishments, such as garment factories, and raising public awareness.

THREE MAJOR CAUSES

As per the statistics, between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2020, 71,684 or over 71 percent of fires originated from electric disturbances, various types of burners, and burning cigarettes.

Buet civil engineering department's Prof Mehedil Ahmed Ansari identified electric short-circuit of this ilk as the main reason behind the rise in fire incidents, suggesting periodical inspection of electric equipment as a solution.

He also cited people's lack of awareness regarding fire safety as another reason.

ENFORCING BUILDING CODE

Prof Ansari said in a study a few years back, it was found that most high-rises in Dhaka and other cities were without fire safety measures, primarily as they constructed flouting the building code. "These buildings should be inspected immediately to ensure fire safety," he said.

Ansari said the recent statistics suggest fire incidents in garment factories have declined sharply, as fire safety measures have been strictly maintained at most garment factories as Accord and Alliance, two western buyers'

platforms, created huge pressure on owners following the Rana Plaza tragedy in 2013.

"But quality fire safety is not being ensured in other offices, factories, and residential houses -- both in high-rise and low-rise ones. The government should strictly enforce the [updated] building code to ensure urban fire safety," he said.

"Rajuk is supposed to implement the building code, but it lacks adequate and quality human resources."

He recommended keeping fire extinguishers on every floor and training people on their use in the case of any fire incident. He also said building owners must provide tenants with keys to the entrance and the rooftop to help with evacuation.

ENGAGING PRIVATE ORGS

Experts said no government body deals with fire safety issues in most countries in the world. "Private companies are given the responsibility and the government only monitors it."

"We've long been suggesting the government to assign a private organisation to work for ensuring fire-safety in existing buildings and implement the building code in constructing new ones," Ansari told the news agency.

INCLUDING FIRE SAFETY IN TEXTBOOKS

Abdul Momen, Assistant Director (training) of Fire Service and Civil Defence Directorate, said trained volunteers are needed alongside awareness among people to check fire incidents.

He said the government, with the help of NGOs, can train people in the major cities and fire-prone districts to help deal with fire hazards before fire fighters arrive.

He also said it's necessary to include fire safety issues in the national curricula.

'BANGLADESH IN 2041' IUB holds conference

CITY DESK

Independent University, Bangladesh yesterday held a conference in Dhaka yesterday, said a press release.

As chief guest, Planning Minister MA Mannan addressed the daylong conference titled "Bangladesh in 2041: Notions and Narratives of Diversification and Transformation" organised by the Department of Social Science and Humanities at IUB.

Dr Rehman Sobhan, chairman of Centre for Policy Dialogue, delivered the keynote speech. Johannes Van der Klaauw, UNHCR representative in Bangladesh; Charles Whiteley, ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh; Prof Atiur Rahman; IUB Board of Trustees Chairman A Matin Chowdhury; and VC Tanweer Hasan also spoke at the programme.

Use Covid drug

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Medical College; Prof Faruk Ahmed, director of Sheikh Russell Gastro Liver Institute and Hospital; and Dr Nazrul Islam, professor of rheumatology at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University -- urged physicians to make judicious use of molnupiravir.

In his vote of thanks, Dr Mohammad Mujahidul Islam, executive director of Eskayef's marketing and sales department, said Eskayef authorities have been working by considering the pandemic as a "war". He informed that the company has already started exporting Monuvir to multiple countries across South East Asia and Africa.

Last year, Eskayef was among the first drug makers in the world to roll out the antiviral remdesivir, a drug that had generated significant interest for treating Covid-19, and exported it to 43 countries.

Molnupiravir was originally developed at US-based Emory University by the university's drug innovation company, Drug Innovation Ventures at Emory, to treat influenza. It was then acquired by Miami-based Company Ridgeback Biotherapeutics, which later partnered with Merck & Co to develop the drug further.

Death anniv of Akhtaruzzaman

CITY DESK

Today is the third death anniversary of Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury, a retired deputy general manager of Janata Bank, said a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil and Qurankhwani will be held at Eidgah Mosque in Dhanmondi, a milad mahfil at his Dhanmondi residence after Zohr prayers and prayers at his Banani grave in Dhaka.

Act now

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(Bapa) Sylhet chapter.

During the rally, Abdul Karim Kim, general secretary of Bapa in Sylhet, said, "The earth is not only for humans, but for all animals. Those elephants should not have been killed, yet they are being killed by humans."

Advocate Shahidul Islam Shahin, vice-president of Bapa's Sylhet chapter, said, "We urge the government to be sincere. Those who are killing elephants and preparing to kill more must be punished under the law."

12 US senators

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operate with impunity in the camps. They also called upon the government to allow consistent, unimpeded access to the camps for humanitarian actors and volunteers and a full resumption of security activities.

The senators include Jeffery A Merkley, Marco Rubio, Benjamin L Cardin, Susan M Collins, Richard Durbin, Roger Wicker, Christopher A Coons, Ron Wyden, Chris Van Hollen, Edward J Markey, Cory A Booker, and Elizabeth Warren.

On the other hand, the senators lauded the government for sheltering the Rohingya, managing the crisis, and vaccinating the 35,000 Rohingyas. They welcomed the MoU signed between government and UN Refugee Agency on a policy framework on Bhashan Char.

Saying they are troubled by recent reports that some Rohingya, who attempted to escape Bhasan Char, were detained and returned to the island, they urged the government to ensure voluntary and fully informed relocations to the camp.

"We do not support the forced relocation of Rohingya to Bhasan Char and have prohibited the use of funds to support such a policy."

"As elected representatives of the United States, the largest donor to the humanitarian response in Cox's Bazar, we look forward to continuing to work with you to find durable solutions to this crisis," they said in the letter.

Until the Rohingya can return home safely, Bangladesh will "unfortunately carry an outsized responsibility" to ensure their protection, they also said.

As elected officials in the US, they said they are prepared to do their part to help Bangladesh attain sufficient international support and resources to help both Rohingya and affected Bangladesh communities in Cox's Bazar.

They will also encourage meaningful consideration of third country resettlement options, holding Myanmar accountable, and keep pressuring the international community, including their own country, to respond strongly to the coup in Myanmar.

আর্কিটেক্ট সাহায্য প্রয়োজন

সার্ভিস RMG এলাকায় পানিশালীলের পুরুষ পাদ ও সংলগ্নস্থানে একটি পরিপূর্ণ ১০০ শয়ার হাসপাতাল তৈরীর জন্য উস্তুর আধুনিক চিকিৎসার আর্কিটেক্ট ডিজাইন সাহায্য প্রয়োজন। নবীন, তৎক্ষণাত্মক আধুনিক পানিশালীর পাবেন। দুটি সংগ্রহের মধ্যে প্রাথমিক ডিজাইন জ্যাম দিতে হবে।

ডাঃ রেজাউল হক

পরিচালনা, RMG সাহায্য পানিশালীন, গণবাহু কেন্দ্র
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JS goes

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Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury to fix duration and agendas of the session.

The 14th session of the parliament, which started on September 1, was prorogued on September 16, with a total of seven sittings following all necessary health guidelines amid the pandemic.

Five killed

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calmed them down after half an hour.

In Pabna, two people were killed and 10 others were injured as a truck hit a human haulier on the Pabna-Rajshahi highway in Sadar upazila.

The deceased were identified as Nusrat Mithi (18), from Pachuria village in Chatmohar upazila, and one-year-old Abdul Rahman, son of Sharif Hossain from the Sadar upazila.

Police said the accident took place in Maligasa Mondoler Dhal area around 12:30pm while it was raining.

12 injured passengers of the human haulier were rushed to Pabna General Hospital, where doctors declared Mithi and Rahman dead.

Police seized the truck but its driver managed to flee.

In Savar, a man was killed after a bus hit him on the Dhaka-Aricha highway in Thana road area.

The deceased was identified as Shubol Chandra Bormon (70), said Savar Highway Police Station OC Atiur Rahman.

The accident occurred around 7:30am when Shubol was waiting beside the highway to cross the road. Police seized the bus but its driver and helper fled the scene.

Driver, helper arrested

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Nazem Uddin of Kotwali Police Station said. Soon, a quarrel broke out, leading to Ashraf shoving Hamid off the bus, injuring him. Locals immediately called 999 and asked for police intervention. Police detained Ashraf and seized the bus, while driver Hasan managed to flee.

Later on yesterday morning, police conducted a raid at Tiger Pass and arrested him, officials said. A case was filed.

Charges

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Ten people have been made prosecution witnesses in the charge sheet.

On April 8, one Syed Adnan Shanto filed the case against five people, including Madani on charges of making anti-state remarks and incitement of chaos.

On March 25, Madani was arrested in Motijheel area during a demonstration, protesting the visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion of the golden jubilee of Bangladesh's independence.

But he was released from custody soon after the incident.

Rab arrested him from his ancestral home in Netrokona's Purbatola area on April 7.

Three more cases filed

Solidaridad

Network Asia

Sealed Tenders are hereby invited from the eligible Tenderers for the following tender as defined in the tender documents of mentioned items as per terms and conditions stated below.

Project Name	Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security and Linkages (SaFaL-2)

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