



The person [CEC] appointed by the president held the Dec 30 [2018] polls on the night of Dec 29.

CEB President Mujahidul Islam Selim

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16 PAGES : Tk 12.00



P3
The floating hotels of Dhaka



P6
'I hope 2022 has intriguing roles for me'



P7
Weather likely caused Rawat's chopper crash



P11
Kohli eyes first series win in South Africa

ROAD SAFETY MANAGEMENT

Barely held accountable

WB says before financing \$360m project in Bangladesh

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Different bodies exist in Bangladesh to ensure road safety, but they are not empowered and lack effective coordination to get expected outcomes.

These organisations are also not held accountable. Besides, the fund allocated for road safety action plans is insufficient, not prioritised, and has never been institutionalised.

These are the observations the World Bank made in an appraisal report prepared for financing a road safety project in Bangladesh, when an increasing number of people are being killed in crashes in the country.

The Roads and Highways Department (RHD), which will lead the multi-sectoral project worth around \$360 million (Tk 3,086.54 crore), sent the Development Project Proposal to the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges yesterday.

The WB will lend \$300m of the total project fund. The global lender in the report said the situation had been worsening in the past decades -- between 1990 and 2017 -- as the rise in the road crash fatality rate in Bangladesh was three times higher than that across the South Asia region.

Even the Bangladesh Police report, which is considered very conservative, finds the situation deteriorating further.

Its data shows a sharp rise in road crashes in the last few years though government agencies promised and initiated different steps after a major road safety movement in July-August 2018.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Nearly **60%** of road crashes are on inter-urban national and regional highways

Almost **half** of urban crash fatalities occur in the Dhaka metropolitan area

Poor quality, **unreliable** data on crash deaths and injuries impede proper road safety management

Vehicle regulations and inspections are **inadequate** to cater to the rapid growth in vehicle ownership

Rudimentary road safety management structure exists but **not empowered**

SOURCE
WB PROJECT APPRAISAL DOCUMENT



ROAD CRASH DATA

Year	Accident	Death	Injury
2021 (up to August)	3,701	3,502	3,479
2020	4,198	3,918	3,826
2019	4,147	4,138	4,411
2018	2,609	2,635	1,920

SOURCE: BANGLADESH POLICE



PROPOSED WB-FUNDED PROJECT

Component 1: Multi-sectoral Road Safety Pilot Projects

Component 2: Priority Road Safety Investments

Component 3: Technical Assistance

9 killed in 5 road crashes

STAR REPORT

Nine people, including three teenage boys, were killed, while many others injured, in five separate road accidents in Dinajpur, Barishal, Jashore and Bogura yesterday.

In Dinajpur, three students of grades eight and nine were killed in Birganj upazila.

The dead were identified as Md Shahadat Hossain, 14, son of Afsar Ali, Shahriar Shuvo, 14, son of Jahangir Hossain, and Muzahid Hossain, 13, son of Md Sukkur Ali.

Shahadat and Shuvo were ninth-graders, while Muzahid an eighth grader of Kabi Nazrul High School.

Meraz Ali, officer of Birganj Fire Service and Civil Defence, said the boys went to school on a motorcycle to complete the admission process for their new year at school.

Later, they went for a ride on Dinajpur-Panchagarh highway on their bike when a microbus hit them around 12:40pm. After they fell on the road, a speeding truck ran over them, leaving Shahadat and Shuvo dead on the spot.

Locals rescued and rushed Muzahid to Birganj Upazila Health Complex but doctors declared him dead upon arrival, said Meraz.

In the district's Birampur upazila, Rajib Uddin, 63, was killed when a speeding pick-up van hit the rickshaw he was on.

Suman Kumar Mohanta, officer-in-charge of Birampur Police Station, said Rajib, a vegetable trader, was in Dhaka Mor area on a rickshaw when the pick-up hit him from behind around 11:30am.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Won't tolerate any graft

Warns new CJ

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newly appointed Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique yesterday issued a stern warning against corruption and irregularities.

"Corruption is a cancer. I will take action against all sorts of graft and irregularities. I will not compromise on it," he said at a felicitation programme accorded to him by Attorney General AM Amin Uddin and the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) at the chief justice's courtroom in the Supreme Court.

The CJ promised to identify and eradicate every problem that can obstruct dispensation of justice. "I want to express my desire to all involved in the judicial functions that we will not tolerate any ills. I hope I will get all by my side to remove opacity, irregularities, sluggishness and incompetence from all sections of the Supreme Court," he said.

He also said he would constitute a monitoring cell, headed by High Court judges, for each of the country's eight divisions to reduce backlog of cases, bring transparency and ensure speedy trial in

SEE PAGE 2 COL 7



US SANCTIONS ON RAB

Dhaka now wants them reconsidered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka has requested Washington to reconsider the sanctions imposed on Rab and its seven current and former officials.

In a letter to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen late last month lauded Rapid Action Battalion for its roles in the fight against drugs, human trafficking and militancy.

Inspector General of Police Benazir Ahmed, who was once director general of Rab, and five officials were sanctioned by the US. Benazir and former Rab official Lt Col Miftah Uddin Ahmed are not allowed in the US.

It was not known whether Momen's letter mentioned any measures that might be taken against the individuals facing the sanctions. A ministry source said Momen's letter contained 12 pages of details on what Dhaka is doing regarding the matter.

For sanctions to be lifted, the Global Magnitsky Accountability Act mentions, the individual facing the sanction has to be prosecuted appropriately. Or the person has to

credibly demonstrate a significant change in behaviour, pay an appropriate consequence for the activities, and credibly commit to not engage in the types of activities.

Contacted, former foreign secretary Touhid Hossain said, "Foreign Minister mentioned Bangladesh's position in his letter. However, the law stipulates the way out of the sanctions, and concerns remain as to how those specific conditions can be met."

Momen earlier said the government had no information corroborating the US statement that Rab and other law enforcement agencies are responsible for 600 disappearances since 2009 and nearly 600 extrajudicial killings since 2018, as well as torture.

According to officials concerned, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina entrusted Foreign Minister Momen, Law Minister Anisul Huq and Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan to discuss the matter and determine the next course of action.

At an event in Sylhet yesterday, Momen said Bangladesh's foundation is democracy. In Bangladesh, voter turnout is generally 70-80 percent,

while 26 percent turnout in the US is considered good, he said.

"We said we have no compromise on human rights issues. Whenever Rab did anything illegal, they were punished," he said referring to the letter.

Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of the legal and media wing of Rab, told The Daily Star yesterday that Rab wanted a solution to the problem with the US by establishing a cordial relationship with the country.

He said Rab officials have been receiving training since 2011 under the US International Criminal Investigation Training Assistance Program and at least five batches received the training in phases as of 2019.

"Due to Covid-19, the training was postponed and a process to restart the programme is underway," he said, adding, "We believe a cordial relationship will be established between the two countries through the training and the misunderstanding will be gone."

Rab bought a Bell 406 helicopter from the US in 2012, he added.



GRADUATION FROM LDC

Framing a strategy for smooth shift

Says PM at official celebration

UNB, DHAKA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government has taken a step to formulate a "National Smooth Transition Strategy", aiming to make smooth graduation of Bangladesh from Least Developed Country (LDC) group to a developing one.

"To ensure smooth graduation to a developing country, the process is on to formulate a National Smooth Transition Strategy. All kinds of directives have to be incorporated in the strategy to face the future challenges," she said.

She said this while addressing an official celebration programme marking the Graduation of Bangladesh from LDC to Developing Country.

The programme was held at Bangabandhu International Conference centre while the prime minister joined from the Gono Bhaban virtually.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 7

Hassle of heating food in the harder way

Hassle of defrosting in the harder way

Unnecessary worry about extra bills and taking the harder way

WHY THE HARDER WAY? CHOOSE THE SINGER WAY

SINGER Microwave Oven

- Defrosting in 5 mins
- Electricity Bill 20 paisa/min
- Easy Heating

*Conditions apply