



This spot in Lalbagh's Beribadh area is used by locals to dump waste, which by itself is an environmental and health hazard. However, after this waste accumulates for a while, it is burned, both to clear the spot and sell the remains as raw materials. This is like a double whammy, as the emission only stands to worsen the surrounding environment. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

2021, a violent year for women

Mahila Parishad, BNWLA reports paint grim picture

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 3,703 incidents of torture and sexual violence against children and women took place across the country between January and December 2021, revealed a report of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad yesterday.

Of them, 1,235 women were raped, including 179, who were gang-raped. In addition, 629 girls were raped, while 62 girls were gang-raped within this period. The women's rights organisation made the report citing data collected from reports published in 13 national newspapers.

Another 155 women, including 93 girls, faced rape attempts in the past year, while 31 women and girls (22 girls) were murdered after rape, and seven died by suicide after the incidents.

Besides, 95 women and girls faced other forms of sexual violence in this period.

In 2021, 22 women, including five girls, were subjected to acid attacks, while four of them died due to the attacks; another 180, including 153, girls were subjected to abduction, and 42 were subjected to trafficking.

A total of 444 women, including 114 children, were killed for various reasons. At least 138 women and girls were tortured for dowry, while 45 of them were killed for dowry.

Besides, 208 women, including girls, also faced physical violence in 2021, while 427 women, including 131 girls, died mysteriously in the past year.

At least 327 child marriages took place last year, the statement also mentioned.

Meanwhile, a report of Bangladesh National Women Lawyer's Association (BNWLA) found that 2,588 incidents of torture and sexual violence against women and girls took place across the country last year. Advocate Zubaida Parvin, general secretary of BNWLA, revealed this in a press conference at the capital's National Press Club yesterday.

PRAYER TIMING JAN 4						
	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
	Azan 5:30	12:45	4:00	5:30	7:00	
	Jamaat 6:05	1:15	4:15	5:35	7:30	
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION						

COX'S BAZAR RAPE

Petition seeks judicial inquiry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday filed a writ petition with the High Court, seeking its directive on the government to conduct a judicial inquiry into the gang-rape of a tourist in Cox's Bazar on December 22 last year.

Md Abdullah Al Harun Russell submitted the petition as a public interest litigation to the HC.

The petition also requested the High Court to pass necessary order for taking appropriate action against those responsible for the incident.

Citing the petition, the lawyer told The Daily Star that law enforcement agencies have delivered separate information and statements on the incident.

Therefore, a judicial inquiry is needed to uncover facts, he said.

The lawyer said the High Court may hold a hearing on the writ petition today or tomorrow.

On December 22, three men raped the woman while their cohorts took her husband and child hostage.

The woman, her husband, and their eight-month-old child went to Cox's Bazar on holiday from the capital, according to the case documents.

A total of four persons have been arrested so far in connection with the case.

According to law enforcers, two more accused are on the run.

Seven people have been made accused in the case, they added.

‘Enforce law, hold culprits accountable’

Speakers urge at meeting on road, waterway safety

Anarchy and dishonesty are apparent in the country's transport sector. Even the administration at times turned "helpless" when faced with threats from influential groups.

SYEDA RIZWANA HASAN
Chief executive of Bela

The government enacted the Road Transport Act-2018 in face of several protests. However, steps required to properly enforce the law has not been undertaken yet.

ILIAS KANCHAN
Road-safety campaigner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Political will is required to ensure safety and bring back order to the country's roads and waterway, said speakers at a views-exchange meeting yesterday.

Besides, they stressed the need for proper enforcement of relevant laws to make perpetrators of road and waterway accidents accountable and ensure compensation for victims' families, and formulate a comprehensive law replacing the existing Inland Shipping Ordinance-1976.

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) organised the meeting on "Deaths on Waterway and Road due to Negligence: Doable in Ensuring Due Compensation and Liability" at the capital's Cirdap.

Addressing the event, Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, said anarchy and dishonesty are apparent in the country's transport sector.

Even the administration at times turned "helpless" when faced with threats from influential groups, she said.

The situation on the roads is not safe for people's commute, commented Barrister Sara Hossain, honorary executive director of BLAST, during her speech.

Renowned actor and road-safety campaigner

Ilias Kanchan said the government enacted the Road Transport Act-2018 in the face of several protests and campaigns from advocacy groups.

However, the steps required to properly enforce the law have not been undertaken yet, he said.

He also mentioned that even a set of rules for the law is yet to be formulated.

In his concluding remarks, Justice Nizamul Haque, former judge at the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, said those responsible for negligence in road and waterway accidents should be held accountable as per law.

Besides, he urged advocacy groups to continue campaigns to build awareness about road and waterway safety issues.

Among others, Barrister Aneek R Haque of the Supreme Court also addressed the event.

In a recently published appraisal report prepared for financing a road safety project in Bangladesh, the World Bank observed that different bodies exist in Bangladesh to ensure road and waterway 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.



This pet mother refuses to see her dog as a mere canine. Curious about its get-up, when this photojournalist approached her, she said the dog is like a child to her, which is why she tries to give her all the attention in the world. Yesterday, she was on her way to the veterinarian for a check-up, with the dog all dressed up for the winter cold. This photo was taken from Shanir Akhra area.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Dhaka air too ‘unhealthy’

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka continues to gasp for fresh air as the city ranks the fourth most polluted city. Dhaka's air quality index (AQI) score was recorded at 197 at 10am yesterday, which is considered "unhealthy".

Dubai, Lahore and Delhi occupied the top three spots with AQI scores of 751, 326, and 305, respectively, in the latest list of cities considered 'hazardous' in terms of air.

AQI is an index used by government agencies to inform people about their city's air quality and associated health factors of concern.

In Bangladesh, the AQI is based on five criteria pollutants – Particulate Matter (PM10 and PM2.5), NO2, CO, SO2 and Ozone.

A report by the Department of Environment (DoE) and the World Bank in March 2019 pointed out that as a city struggling with air quality, the three main sources of Dhaka's air pollution "are brick kilns, fumes from vehicles and dust from construction sites".

In winter, the city's air quality starts deteriorating sharply due to the massive discharge of pollutant particles from construction works, rundown roads, brick kilns and others.

Air pollution consistently ranks among the top risk factors for death and disability worldwide. As per the World Health Organization (WHO), air pollution kills an estimated seven million people worldwide every year.

‘Their allowance still paltry’

Planning minister tells webinar about persons with disabilities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It is saddening that people with disabilities receive only around Tk 10,000 annually as allowance, even though Bangladesh's per capita income has crossed US \$2,500, Planning Minister MA Mannan told a webinar yesterday.

He assured organisations working for the rights of such people that he'll arrange a pre-budget discussion with the finance minister and secretary, so that the organisations can raise their voices and demands.

Mannan made the comments at the webinar titled "Disability Inclusive National Budget 2022-2023", jointly organised by Access Foundation Bangladesh and The Daily Star, in association with Manusher Jonno Foundation and UK Aid.

Albert Mollah, co-founder and executive director of Access Bangladesh Foundation, while presenting a paper, said although adoption of development plans and budget allocations largely depends on reliable statistics, there are no reliable statistics on the total number of persons with disabilities in Bangladesh, he said.

The budget allocated for such people is also very inadequate, he stated.

Albert suggested that every child with disabilities must be covered with government stipends, and the children's enrolment in vocational education must be increased.

Urging for increased allowance for persons with disabilities, Khandaker Jahurul Alam, executive director of Centre for Services and Information on Disability, said such people get a monthly allowance of Tk 750 from the social welfare ministry, which stands at only Tk 25 a day.

During her welcome speech, Nazrana Yeasmin Hira, coordinator at MJF, highlighted that the allocation for people with disabilities must not be limited to social safety net budgets. Rather, there must be more emphasis on teaching them skills, so that they can be self-reliant.

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3 of a family die as trawler capsizes in the Meghna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Three members of a family died and one was missing as a trawler capsized in the Meghna in Cumilla yesterday.

The deceased – Julekha Akter (55), her grandchildren Ayesha Akter (12), and Mariam Akter (7), – are from Raipur village in Titas upazila. They were residents of Dhaka's Demra area.

The engine-run trawler carrying 14 passengers capsized while it was heading to Titas from Daudkandi around 2:00pm.

Locals rescued 13 of them and took Daudkandi Alham Hospital where doctors declared Julekha, Ayesha and Mariam dead.

Confirming the deaths, Samiruddin of Meghna Police Station said the bodies were kept at local health complex.