



The way these bricks are piled up by this road near Mohakhali flyover are in violation of multiple laws. For one, they occupy the entire footpath, then there's the issue of leaving the bricks uncovered -- which disregards the mandate of city authorities for construction materials -- while there's also the very real risk that the stacks might collapse right on top of pedestrians at any time. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

BIWTA finally wakes up

Forms 5 'high-powered' committees to inspect launches

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) seemed to have woken up from deep slumber after the death of 49 people and scores of injuries in the devastating MV Abhijan-10 fire incident last month.

The state-run agency has formed as many as five "high-powered" committees for checking safety issues of water vessels to prevent such incidents.

Formed on Wednesday, the committees will be led by a director or chief engineers of BIWTA and will start work within a day or two, said Rafiqul Islam, director (marine safety and traffic management) of BIWTA.

A BIWTA official said launch owners are very influential, which is why lower-level staffers working at Sadarghat often cannot take and follow through with tough decisions regarding safety.

"This is why five committees have been formed with top officials, who will inspect each launch before departure," he said, wishing not to be named.

Three directors and two chief engineers will lead each of the five-member committee, Rafiqul Islam said.

The committee will work at Sadarghat in the first stage, and later work in Barishal, Chandpur and Narayanganj terminals, he added.

Meanwhile, the shipping ministry is working to take punitive actions, after a probe report of the incident was submitted on Monday.

"We are working. Action will be taken soon," Shipping Secretary Mezbah Uddin Chowdhury told The Daily Star last night. To ensure fire safety and resolve some other issues, the shipping department said it will sit with designers of different private firms next week.

"However, we will work on other issues upon receiving recommendations of the probe committee," Manjurul Kabir, chief engineer and ship surveyor of the department, told this correspondent last night.

PRAYER
TIMING
JAN 7

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	5-30	12-30	4-00	5-30	7-00
Jamaat	6-05	1-15	4-15	5-35	7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

2005 CHILD MURDER CASE

Take action against 19 cops for defying court order: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The HC yesterday ordered the inspector general of police to take appropriate action against 19 police personnel, including the IO concerned, for not giving statements as witnesses before the trial court in a murder case in Dhaka.

The case was filed with Shahjahanpur Police Station on April 10, 2005, after a severed head of a ten-year-old child was recovered from underneath an over-bridge on the previous day.

The HC yesterday acquitted the accused -- Md Anowar Hossain alias Md Rajib alias Golam Rabbani alias Shankar Chandra Debnath and Md Zakir Hossain alias Zakir -- who were sentenced to death by the trial court. The HC observed that the police personnel, who were witnesses of the case, did not appear before the court to file statements, and the accused have been sentenced to death only on their confessional statements.

The trial was at a halt for eight years due to the witnesses' absence. Only SI Gazi Mohammad Ibrahim, who filed the case, two magistrates and two doctors filed statements to the lower court.

We walked day and night through the jungle and on mountainous roads. During the journey, I even had to cross a river on a plastic boat.

Habibur (28), a resident of Dhaka's Keraniganj.

But after all of this, he could barely work for two months as an undocumented worker, before being caught by Greek police for illegal entry into the European Union (EU) countries.

He was then sent to a detention centre. After a 15-month stay there, he was deported back to Bangladesh, along with 18 other Bangladeshi workers last month.

Although such trials are well-known by now, Bangladeshis still continue to seek illegal

migration to EU countries, all in the search for better fortunes, even after records show that this path could lead to fatal incidents in the Mediterranean Sea.

According to UNHCR data, between January and November last year, 7,574 Bangladeshis crossed sea and land routes to enter Europe illegally.

On Monday, the deportees from Greece, who returned empty-handed, staged a sit-in and token hunger strike in



FILE PHOTO

front of the Jatiya Press Club in the capital, urging that the government support them financially.

They said some of them had to spend up to Tk 13 lakh to Tk 14 lakh to migrate to Greece, but couldn't gain back any of it.

Habibur said he initially went to Iraq in 2018, but was exploited there as his employer did not pay him in two months. He decided to go to Greece after fellow migrant workers in Iraq told him

opportunity arrives.

Contacted over phone on Wednesday, Faiyaz Murshid Kazi, director general (West Europe and EU) of the foreign ministry, said the 19 Bangladeshis were deported from Greece under a standard operating procedure between EU and Bangladesh.

He said Greece has shown its interest to hire Bangladeshis through regular channels, adding that both countries are working in this regard.



With their pick-up truck overloaded with goods, this duo were seen sitting on the edges of the vehicle, almost hanging from it by holding on to a rope for dear life. Many around the capital are often seen taking decisions like this while travelling, their confidence preventing them from seeing how precarious the situation is. This photo was taken from Airport Road near Nikunja area yesterday.

SUPPLY OF 2 CARGO SHIPS

Govt cancels 33-yr-old contract with Pakistan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has cancelled a contract with Pakistan, as the latter failed to supply two cargo ships, even after 33 years of signing the agreement.

The cabinet yesterday approved a proposal to cancel procurement of the two cargo vessels for Bangladesh Shipping Corporation from Pakistan.

Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam disclosed the information after coming out from a cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. She joined the meeting virtually, held at the secretariat.

Anwarul said Shipping Corporation inked a \$50 million deal for purchasing two containers from Pakistan on October 13, 1988. "To date, they did not supply these." The Pakistan government has paid \$8.85 million to Karachi Shipyard for this. "However, we didn't pay any money," he said.

Since they did not supply the vessels even after so many years, the cabinet cancelled the contract.

Six other agendas were discussed in the meeting. The cabinet approved the draft of "Bangladesh Public Private Partnership (Amendment) Act, 2021". Anwarul said usually, the prime minister presides over board of governance meetings of PPP. In her absence, the finance minister could lead the meeting.

Earlier, the board of PPP could take decisions on financial matters. Since the government is giving money after the amendment, participation of government representatives in the board is ensured. The cabinet also approved a draft contract on prevention of tax evasion and imposition of double taxation between Bangladesh and Qatar. Any temporary business of Qatar in Bangladesh will have to pay tax to the Qatar government only and vice versa.

The cabinet also approved a draft of "Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan, 2020-2030".

'Every citizen has the right to identity'

ECs for including individuals with unidentified parents in voter list, NID

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Election Commissioners yesterday said changes in the existing legal framework are essential to include "unidentified individuals whose parents were unknown" in the voters' list and issue NID cards for them.

"There is no place for these people in the current system. The legal framework needs to change. Without NID or parents' identification, they are being deprived of many services," Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda said at a workshop.

Election Commission organised the workshop on eliminating the complexity of registering names of unidentified persons in the voter list.

There are two mandatory options to write down names of father and mother to enrol into voters list, on which the issuance of NID cards depends.

CEC Nurul Huda said that if the constitution is to be complied with, there is no scope to exclude several lakhs of unidentified individuals from the voters' list.

While presenting the keynote, EC Kabita Khanam said it is necessary to change existing law to end the complexities of enrolling unidentified individuals in the voter list and issuing them NID cards.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

HSC graduate 'doctor' held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

His credentials say he is an MBBS doctor and a "medicine and child specialist".

Patients have to take prior appointment to see "doctor" Mohiuddin Ahmed Masud at Central Bashabo General Hospital. He has been attending patients, including children, there for about one and a half years.

Masud, however, only completed his HSC -- from a college in Barishal.

His fraudulence came to light after Rab carried out a raid at the hospital and arrested Masud on Wednesday night, said Farjana Haque, operations officer of Rab-3. Masud has been posing as a doctor for a long time, she added.

"Masud used to sign contracts with various

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Launch owners are very influential, which is why lower-level staffers working at Sadarghat often cannot take and follow through with tough decisions regarding safety. That's why five committees have been formed with top officials, who will inspect each launch before departure.

A top BIWTA official