

## Four killed as bus hits auto-rickshaw

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Dinajpur

Four people, including an auto-rickshaw driver, were killed and two were injured when a bus overtook after hitting the vehicle in Rangpur yesterday evening.

The accident took place on the Rangpur-Kurigram highway in the city's Nabdiganj.

One of the deceased was identified as Anil Chandra (45).

Farid Ahmad Chowdhury, assistant director of Rangpur divisional fire service, said the accident occurred when the Burimari-bound passenger bus "Manik Express" from Kurigram hit the auto-rickshaw from the opposite direction.

Three people, including the driver, died on the spot. On information, the fire service personnel rushed to the spot and started rescue operation.

The injured were taken to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.



Despite having 5 ICUs and 15 HDUs, none of them are operational due to a lack of staffers -- the same problem that plagues every department of the Dhaka Mahanagar General Hospital.

PHOTO: STAR



Dhaka South City Corporation has two hospitals and a Matri Sadan under its management. Recent investigation by The Daily Star has brought to the fore their shambolic state. On today's first story, we take a look into **DHAKA MAHANAGAR GENERAL HOSPITAL.**

## They've been doing this for two years: Rab

Transgender vlogger's captors have history of blackmailing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The three persons arrested over holding transgender beauty vlogger Saad Mui captives and abusing her have been involved with extorting money from people through blackmailing for about two years.

They used to befriend people on social media, invite them over to their rented home and eventually blackmail them by taking "compromising" photos and videos.

During the process, they used to pose as members of armed forces or as law enforcers.

Khandaker Al Moin, Rab's legal and media wing director, shared the information at a press conference, after arresting the three accused from Dhaka's Farmgate and Mohakhali areas yesterday.

The arrestees are: Fuad Amin Ishtiaque (21), Saima Sikder Nira alias RJ Nira (23), and Abdullah Afif Sadman (19). All are students of a private university.

Rab claimed to have recovered a walkie-talkie and a toy pistol, which they used to impersonate law enforcers.

Briefing reporters, the Rab director said the arrestees are members

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# Too many problems

## Surgery dept closed for 6yrs, ICU beds inactive, half of doctors' posts empty

DIPAN NANDY

The Dhaka Mahanagar General Hospital is located at Naya Bazar, near the Babubazar Bridge. Its outdoor department is always crowded with patients, many of whom go there for Covid vaccines these days.

But the hospital's insides tell a different tale. For six years, the surgery department of the Dhaka South City Corporation-run hospital has remained closed. With its 50 beds gone, the 150-bed hospital is virtually a 100-bed facility now.

Meanwhile, at the early phases of

**Hospital authorities say they have requisitioned for necessary staffers for the ICUs and HDUs repeatedly, but to no avail. From last March to July 6, they have sent letters to the health ministry and directorate four times**

the pandemic, the Covid-dedicated hospital was given ICU beds by the health directorate. But due to a shortage of physicians and other staff, it could not be started.

Moreover, almost half of the hospital's doctors' posts are empty.

**DOCTORS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND**

During a recent visit, this correspondent spoke to visiting patient Akmal Mia, a resident of Tipu Sultan Road. "We're poor, so we can't go see doctors at bigger hospitals, which is why we come here," he said. "But the number of doctors here is very low, so it takes a long time to see one."

Armanitola's Salma Khatun echoed the same. "I'm sitting here for a long time. People are telling me it's taking this long because there are a lot of patients but not

nearly enough doctors at the hospital."

Attendants also complained about a lot of things. One of them, Iqbal Hossain, said, "My brother is admitted here, but we can never find a doctor around. They come once in the morning, but then disappear for the rest of the day."

**WHAT HAPPENED TO SURGERY DEPT?** Fifty beds for medicine, 50 for gynecology and 50 for surgery -- these make up the 150 beds of the Mahanagar hospital.

But since 2015, the 50-bed surgery department has remained closed. Hospital sources said as soon as Dr Tasfira Hossain



-- who was assigned here from the health directorate -- left, the surgery department has been inactive.

However, surgery is ongoing in its gynecological department, according to sources. For example, in July last year, more than 200 surgeries, minor and major, were carried out by the department. According to DSCC's health department, in 2020-21, the hospital undertook 34 cesarean and 45 minor operations.

**ICU NON-OPERATIONAL EVEN AFTER 16YRS**

To treat Covid patients, the hospital got five of its own Intensive Care Units (ICU) in October 2020. Then in April last year, it got 15 High Dependency Units (HDU).

However, either of them are yet to start operation.

Hospital authorities say they have requisitioned for necessary staffers for the ICUs and HDUs repeatedly, but to no avail. From last March to July 6, they have sent letters to the health ministry and directorate four times, but this has not materialised yet.

Contacted, director (hospital and clinic) of health directorate Farid Hossain Miah said, "We couldn't launch them due to a shortage of staffers. However, if an emergency arises, we will operationalise the ICUs by employing necessary human resources."

**HALF THE DOCTORS MISSING**

The hospital is also suffering from a massive staff crisis. Though it's supposed to have 31 doctors, 15 of those posts are currently vacant. Moreover, five of the active doctors are only here on a temporary basis.

But since all of these doctors are working at the outdoor department, patients admitted to the hospital aren't getting their due treatment.

Hospital Director Dr Shameem Al Mamun said, "With such a staff crisis, it's no wonder that we can't deliver our services well enough," mentioning that they have issued a circular to recruit new nurses and are in talks with the city corporation regarding recruiting new doctors.

Asked about the ICU, he said the health directorate was supposed to initiate it. "They gave us equipment, but didn't recruit staffers for it."

"On the other hand, our organogram does not have provisions for recruiting ICU staff, so we can't start it ourselves."

## Won't serve notice before demolishing illegal structures

### Says DNCC mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Md Atiqul Islam yesterday said they will not serve any notice to owners of illegal structures before demolishing them.

The DNCC mayor made the comment while leading a demolition drive against structures constructed illegally by filling the Lautola canal at Bosila.

During the drive, the DNCC team along with Dhaka district administration demolished around 50 illegal structures including a four-storey

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PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Fall of govt just a matter of time

### Rumeen Farhana tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP MP Rumeen Farhana yesterday told the parliament that the fall of the present government is just a matter of time, after the recent reports of different international organisations against them were published.

"Several international organisations, in their reports released in the last few years, painted grim pictures of Bangladesh. All these have sounded the final bell for the government. The fall of this government is just a matter of time now," she said.

She said this while participating in a discussion on the thanksgiving motion on the president's speech.

"Forced disappearances, extra-judicial killings, torture and deaths in custody, suppression of dissident parties and depoliticisation -- state-sponsored destruction of the electoral system, making

the judiciary subjugated under the executive department by erasing the separation of power and heinous corruption were reflected in the report of the Millennium Challenge Corporation of the USA," said Rumeen.

"The condition of Bangladesh is clear in the reports published in different indexes including democracy, human rights, civil liberty, freedom of expression, rule of law, and election in the last few years by the Freedom House, Bertelsmann Stiftung, V-Dem and the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Economist Intelligence Unit, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Reporters Without Borders, the World Justice Report and Transparency International," she went on.

Referring to the recent US sanction on seven

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PRAYER  
TIMING  
JAN 24



	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	5:30	12:45	4:15	5:43	7:15
Jamaat	6:05	1:15	4:30	5:47	7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

# All in due time

## Foreign minister tells JS he will bring up issue of hiring US lobbyists at next sitting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said he will come up with a statement in the next sitting of the parliament on the much talked about issue on hiring lobbyists in the US.

The minister said this following two opposition MPs' demand in this regard.

The parliament session was prorogued till 11:00pm on Wednesday.

Jatiya Party MP Mujibul Haque Chunnu first raised the issue while speaking on a point of order.

In his speech, Chunnu wanted specific information from the government whether the Awami League or BNP appointed lobbyists in USA, and if so, how much money was spent for this and what was the source of that money.

Chunnu said the state minister for foreign affairs recently told parliament that BNP had spent Tk 32 crore for hiring lobbyists in the United States in the last three years. "Why did they hire the lobbyists? Was it in the interest of

the people of the country or against the interests of the people? This issue has not been cleared," Chunnun said.

The JP MP said after the state minister's statement, a BNP leader told a press conference that the ruling party had appointed lobbyists since 2014 and the ruling party had spent spending Tk 30 crore each year. "Did the ruling party actually do this? What was the reason? Was this money spent from the government's exchequer? Or was it spent from the party's own fund?"

He said they along with the people of the country want to know from BNP how they got the money to appoint lobbyists.

"We want an investigation by a neutral and independent body or a statement of the government on this issue. Let the people of the country know about this."

BNP MP Harunur Rashid said it is not right to state anything based on hypothesis. He hoped the foreign minister will give a statement and make it clear.

Later, Momen said he would make a statement tomorrow.



As this motorbike was passing through Mohammadpur's Asad Gate, an unruly bus overtook it in such a way that the rider and pillion passenger tumbled onto the busy street, narrowly escaping disaster. They were later helped to their feet by another biker, while nearby vehicles slowed down to give them time to recuperate. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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## Zila Parishad chair can't hold post after tenure

Bill placed in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Zila Parishad chairmen and members cannot hold posts after the five-year tenure on any excuse.

A bill in this connection -- titled "Zila Parishad (Amendment) Act 2022" -- was placed in parliament yesterday to make the new system in effect.

Local Government Minister Tazul Islam placed the bill, which was then sent to the parliamentary standing committee on the respective ministry for scrutiny.

The parliamentary watchdog was asked to submit its report within 7 days.

The proposed law