



RK Mission Road at the capital's Gopibagh has been like this for months. After digging deep to facilitate drain development works, the authorities simply put up bamboos to cover the hole, while some other bamboos act as a buttress for electric poles so that they don't fall over. It goes without saying that this is immensely risky and inconvenient for the busy road's commuters. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Power from Payra, Rampal to Dhaka delayed

UNB, Dhaka

Electricity transmission from newly built Payra and Rampal plants to Dhaka's Aminbazar has to wait for at least 7-8 months, as construction of a high voltage 400 kV double-circuit power transmission line is yet to be completed.

Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) incurred a huge financial loss owing to the delay, according to sources.

According to official sources, Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB) had undertaken the 164.6-km-long Aminbazar-Maowa-Mongla transmission line project earlier in 2016, at a cost of Tk 2,505.37 crore.

As per a revised schedule, the project was supposed to be completed by December 2021, but got delayed because of the ongoing Padma Bridge construction.

"Foundation of only two towers out of seven has been completed by Bangladesh Bridge Authority," said Golam Kibria, PGCB managing director.

"We hope to get the rest done by April 2022. PGCB will require another 5-6 months to complete the installation," he added.

A PGCB official said that BPDB has to pay a penalty of Tk 130 crore per month to the Payra power plant for failing to transmit electricity.

GRAFT ALLEGATIONS AGAINST JU VC

Probe incomplete after two years

SHEIKH TAJUL ISLAM

Jahangirnagar University Vice-Chancellor Prof Farzana Islam is going to complete her tenure for the second term on March 2, 2022. However, several allegations against her and JU BCL unit remain unresolved even after two years.

Dr Farzana is the first female VC in the country. But her tenure is marked with allegations of tender manipulation, bribery, and embezzlement of funds, which were raised in 2019. The VC has kept denying the allegations since then, and no proper investigation was done on the matter.

Durmeer Biruddhe Jahangirnagar (Jahangirnagar against corruption), a platform of JU teachers and students, has urged President Abdul Hamid to form a probe committee and submitted a written complaint to the chancellor. They also submitted a list of corruption allegations and evidence to University Grants Commission (UGC) and the education ministry, according to Professor Rayhan Rhyne, convener of the platform.

Earlier, UGC formed a three-member committee to probe into all the allegations, Md Golam Dastagir, senior assistant director of UGC's public university management department, confirmed to this correspondent.

"UGC member Prof Muhammed Alamgir was appointed as convener of the committee, while another member, Dr Dil Afroza Khanam, was appointed as a member. I was appointed as the member secretary," said Dastagir.

When asked about the investigation's progress, Dastagir said, "The allegations are yet to be probed. We failed to complete it, as we couldn't perform on-spot investigation due to the pandemic."

"It's a long process. We have to take interviews and investigate the documents provided to us."

"Dr Alamgir knows better about when we'll go to JU to investigate. Dr Afroza is currently



This is completely unacceptable. The government and UGC didn't look into the allegations seriously enough. They run the university with taxpayers' money, and it is their responsibility to ensure transparency and accountability.

PROF ANU MUHAMMAD
Eminent Economist, JU faculty member

abroad," he said when asked about the submission of the probe report.

Contacted, Prof Alamgir said, "I don't know anything about this, as I'm no longer affiliated with the committee. Golam Dastagir is in charge now." However, neither of them could tell the exact date of forming the committee, how long they have been investigating or the deadline of probe report submission.

"The authorities' silence work as certificates to carry on with the corruption. There has been no transparency. We didn't even know about the committee," said Rakibul Rony, president of Bangladesh Student Union's JU chapter.

Dr Laek Sazzad Andallah, president of JU Teachers' Association, said, "I think the probe committee doesn't see anything serious with the issues. Maybe that's why two years have passed and we still don't know of any progress."

"This is completely unacceptable. The government and UGC didn't look into the allegations seriously enough. They run the university with taxpayers' money, and it is their responsibility to ensure transparency and accountability," said Prof Anu Muhammad, eminent economist and JU faculty member.

This correspondent failed to contact the JU VC despite repeated attempts.

People will no longer fall into AL's trap Says BNP on search committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criticising the search committee to form the next Election Commission, BNP yesterday said the country's people will no longer fall into Awami League's trap.

"They [government] destroyed democracy and the electoral system. They asked why we did not give names to the search committee. It's not the first deception. It's an extreme deception with people," said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir.

Fakhru made the remarks while addressing a programme at BNP chairperson's Gulshan office.

"Like the previous election commissions, they formed this EC in the same way to stay in power," said the BNP leader.

"I want to clearly say that the country's people will no longer put their foot in Awami League's trap. People will destroy all of their [AL's] plans to abolish democracy," he said.

"People will create a national unity to resist these horrible anti-democratic and anti-liberation forces and establish rule through holding a fair election under a neutral election-time government," added Fakhru.

The sales start flowing



DIPAN NANDY

While the first two days of the Amar Ekushey Boi Mela saw a good number of visitors, the third saw another early success for the fair, as publishers reported good sales figures.

After the gates opened at 11:00am, the fair grounds were thronged by children. From the afternoon, the fair became a blend of people of all ages, who stayed till the night and bought a handsome number of books. However, the children and their parents lamented the fact that there's no special children's corner this time.

"We've seen a good crowd since the first day. But today, the sales started flowing as well," said Aditya Antar, owner of Ittadi Grantha Prokash.

This correspondent spoke to book enthusiast Kanchan, who bought Dr Rabiul Murshed's "Have a Nice Day" from Daily Star Books, which is selling steadily.

According to Bangla Academy, 177 new books were published yesterday. Among them are Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq's "Political Parties in India" (UPL) and Mohiuddin Ahmed's "Al-Waada'r Khonje" (Batighor).

Another win for the mother language

Telecom operators to send their messages in Bangla

MAHMUDUL HASAN

To commemorate the Language Movement, telecom operators are set to send all promotional and system-generated text messages and notifications in Bangla from tomorrow.

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) will launch the service to mark International Mother Language Day, the day when people fought for Bangla's recognition and sacrificed their lives on February 21, 1952.

This feature will be beneficial for a vast number

- ➡ Service to launch tomorrow
- ➡ Over 65 percent mobile users still use feature phones
- ➡ Many have hard time reading English texts
- ➡ Initiative only applicable for texts sent by operators to customers
- ➡ Customers will have option for English SMS

This means that banks or other institutions can still send messages in either English or Bangla. However, if any foreign or local customer wants to get their SMS in English exclusively, there will be an option for them.

According to Brig Gen (ret'd) SM Farhad, secretary general of Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh, mobile operators were finalising the initiative.

According to industry insiders, most operators worldwide send out messages in the native language of the country they operate in.

Khairul Basher -- head of communications at Grameenphone, which has over 8.34 crore customers -- said, "Grameenphone believes that

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

PRAYER
TIMING
FEB 19



	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	5:20	12:45	4:30	6:03	7:30
Jamaat	5:55	1:15	4:45	6:07	8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

GANG-RAPE OF WOMAN

3 placed on remand, one sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three accused have been taken into two-day remand, while a woman has been sent to prison in a case filed over abduction and gang-rape of a woman in Dhaka's Lalbagh area.

A Dhaka court yesterday placed prime accused Monir Hossain Shuvo (22), a third-year BBA student, Billal alias Al-Amin (35) and Sujan alias Sabuj (32) on remand, after Lalbagh police produced the four accused before the court, seeking a seven-day remand for them. The court ordered to send Dalia alias Dina (27) to prison, rejecting the remand application.

Dina was arrested from Lalbagh on Thursday night for abetting rape, Khandaker Helal Uddin, inspector (investigation) of Lalbagh Police Station, told this correspondent.

The victim's father filed the case with



Shuvo

Lalbagh Police Station on Thursday, accusing the four.

According to the case statement, the victim (20) was introduced to Shuvo six months back. Around a month ago, she went to her village in Patuakhali. Shuvo promised to marry her and told her to come to Dhaka over phone.

She arrived at Sadarghat from Patuakhali on February 12. Shuvo received her from there, took her to Dina's house in Lalbagh and raped her.

On February 14, she was shifted to Al-Amin's house in Mugda, where Shuvo, Al-Amin and Sabuj raped her again.

Earlier, the victim told police that she was confined, drugged and raped multiple times between February 12 and 16.

She was dumped at Dhaka University's TSC on February 16, from where she was rescued by a pedestrian and admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.



This photo shows seven-year-old Safa, who at a programme in August last year struggled to hold back tears as she demanded the safe return of her missing father. Taken by The Daily Star's senior staff photographer Amran Hossain, the photo has won the title of Picture of the Year 2021 in Bangladesh Press Photo Award.

Star journo receives Bangladesh Press Photo Award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amran Hossain, The Daily Star's senior staff photographer, received Bangladesh Press Photo Award 2022 yesterday in the "Picture of the Year 2021" category. Drik Picture Library handed the awards to Amran and three other photographers.

Drik founder Shahidul Alam, photographer Abir Abdullah, Dhaka Tribune chief photographer Syed Zakir Hossain, Prof Syed Manzoorul Islam and Prof Gitara Nasreen spoke at the event.

An exhibition with 34 selected photos will run at Drik gallery, from 3:00pm-8:00pm till March 2. The exhibition is open for all.