



As the summer heat starts sweeping the city, these two boys decide to take a dip in Crescent Lake to cool off. This photo was taken at the capital's Chandrima Udyan yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

It's nothing but a farce Says Ganosamhati on public hearing to set gas prices

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The public hearing to set prices of gas is nothing but a farce as the authorities organise such hearings after deciding by themselves to increase the price, alleged Ganosamhati Andolon yesterday.

The organisation held a sit-in in front of the TCB building at Karwan Bazar, the office of Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC).

BERC will hold a public hearing on March 21-24.

The last public hearing was held in 2019.

Act against drying of tobacco at schools: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following a The Daily Star report, the High Court yesterday directed the government to take necessary steps to stop drying and processing tobacco leaves on the school premises.

The court also ordered the administration to immediately move tobacco leaves from the premises of Durgapur Government Primary School and Durgapur High School in Lalmonirhat, said Deputy Attorney General Protikar Chakma.

ADB for speeding up 5 major RHD projects



RHD officials notified the ADB team about issues centring price hikes and stone crisis. If the issues prolong, project implementation may be adversely affected.

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Asian Development Bank (ADB) has asked the government to speed up preparatory works for five upcoming road projects, which are aiming to boost sub-regional connectivity.

The multilateral lender, which has already promised to finance the projects, stressed meeting the target to begin the development schemes.

An ADB delegation made the call at a meeting yesterday with officials of Roads and Highways Department (RHD), the projects' implementing agency, three participants of the meeting said.

RHD officials said they were working to expedite preparatory works, which are now at different stages.

The meeting also discussed six ADB-funded ongoing projects. RHD officials notified the ADB team about issues centring price hikes and stone crisis. If the issues prolong, project implementation may be adversely affected, they added.

Ravi Peri, director of ADB's transport and communications division, South Asia Department, led the ADB team, while chief engineer AKM Manir Hossain Pathan led RHD at the meeting, held at the latter's headquarters in Dhaka.

The team later met Nazrul Islam, secretary of Road Transport and Highways Division, at his secretariat office.

The five projects are SASEC Road Connectivity Project-3 and 4; SASEC Dhaka-

South Corridor Improvement Project; SASEC Dhaka-Chattogram Highway Improvement Project; and SASEC Chattogram Port Access Road Improvement Project.

Once implemented, the specific roads will have four or more lanes, which would not only improve internal road communication but also boost regional transport connectivity, RHD officials said.

The South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) programme started in 2001. It is a project-based partnership among Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

It aims to promote regional prosperity, improve economic opportunities, and build a better quality of life for the sub-region's people.

THE 5 PROJECTS

Under SASEC Road Connectivity Project-3, the 110-km two-lane Rangpur-Teesta-Burimari highway would be expanded into a four-lane road with service lanes.

Feasibility study for the project has already been done, and preliminary estimated cost is \$237 million.

However, the study has to be modified, officials said. The project is supposed to start in 2023.

Under SASEC Road Connectivity Project-4, two more lanes, along with service lanes, would be added to the 120-km two-lane Rangpur-Banglabandha highway. Feasibility study of the road was carried out partially. The project is expected to start in 2024.

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ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES Ensure cops don't harass families UN urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations called on the government to ensure that human rights defenders and the families of victims of enforced disappearance do not face any harassment from law enforcement agencies.

"Immediately cease reprisals against human rights defenders and relatives of forcibly disappeared persons for their activism and co-operation with international human rights bodies and UN mechanisms," it said in a statement yesterday.

Following announcement of sanctions imposed by the US against top Rab officials on December 10 last year, Bangladesh authorities have reportedly launched a campaign of threats and harassment against relatives of forcibly disappeared persons, human rights defenders and civil society actors.

Relatives were threatened and forced to sign blank sheets of paper or pre-written statements indicating that their family member was not forcibly disappeared and they had deliberately misled police.

"This is unacceptable," the UN said in the release, signed by the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

An awful day for city commuters



Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue yesterday morning.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ishtiaq Hossain, employee of a private firm, left his home in Khilgaon at 9:00am to go to his office in Farmgate. The commute usually takes around 45 minutes. But yesterday it took nearly two and a half hours.

Just like Ishtiaq, many people who stepped into the road yesterday morning suffered the same fate. Rafiul Islam, a resident of Baily Road, said it took him about an hour to reach Farmgate from Paribagh on a bike. The usual commute time is no more than 10-15 minutes.

One of our photojournalists, Prabir Das, visited Dhaka's Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Shahbagh,

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Must expedite extension work of Dhaka airport PM tells authorities

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the authorities concerned to speed up the expansion work of Dhaka airport.

She also asked to take required measures for land acquisition of the Chattogram airport alongside giving other necessary directives, said a press release of PMO press wing.

The premier gave the directives after witnessing a presentation on progress (1st phase) (1st amended) of the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport's extension work at Gono Bhaban.

The total progress of the work is 23 percent and it is hoped that the work could be completed by November 2023, the release said.

She also stressed the need for increasing income of the Bangladesh Biman as well.

Saudi FM in town

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a two-day visit for holding the first ever political consultation aimed at boosting the bilateral relationship.

He will call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, lay foundation of an Arabic language institute and sign a few memorandum of understandings. According to foreign ministry officials, Saudi Arabia is interested in a number of investment proposals equaling about \$10 billion.

PRAYER
TIMING
MAR 16



| | Fazr | Zohr | Asr | Maghrib | Esha |
|----------------------------|------|-------|------|---------|------|
| Azan | 5:00 | 12:45 | 4:30 | 6:14 | 7:45 |
| Jamaat | 5:35 | 1:15 | 4:45 | 6:18 | 8:15 |
| SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION | | | | | |

'It seems they are denying us justice'

Says father of 11-month-old over delay in probe into the child's death due to alleged negligence

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

After six months of an 11-month-old's death due to alleged negligence in post-operative care, two investigations regarding the death are still in limbo.

A three-member probe body formed by Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital (SSMCH) on September 19 last year, has so far recorded statements of hospital staffers accused of negligence and parents of the child. They were supposed to complete the probe within 10 days.

On the other hand, the disciplinary committee of Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council (BMDC) is yet to arrange any hearing in this regard.

Eleven-month-old Abdullah Al Azan died six hours after surgery for reconstructing his cleft palate at Care Medical College Hospital in the capital on August 22 last year.

The bereaved parents – Abdullah Al

Sayem and Tanzam Aktar – accused the medical staff, particularly the surgeon – Dr BK Das Bijoy – of negligence in medical care and misbehaving.

- Azan dies 6hrs after surgery at Care Medical College Hospital on Aug 22, 2021
- Family says negligence in post-op care
- 2 committees formed by DGHS, BMDC
- After 6 months, probes still in limbo

On August 29, they submitted separate complaints to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) and BMDC, seeking justice.

DGHS directed SSMCH to investigate the incident and the SSMCH authorities formed a body headed by its surgery

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It's been almost a week since a heavy vehicle toppled this traffic light at the Hatijheel BFDC intersection. Even though this area is visited by many city-dwellers, the authorities are yet to mend the broken light, which once aimed to control vehicular movement. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN