



Partially submerged brick kilns by the Turag river in Savar as areas on the outskirts of the capital have started to see floods caused by swollen rivers. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD DATABASE Botched execution leaves it unusable

The long-expected poverty register will fail in its mission, says IMED

REJAU KARIM BYRON

The long-awaited Tk 727 crore National Household Database that is expected to be delivered later this year will not yield the desired outcome for which the project was implemented, said a recent report of the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division.

"Based on the current status, it can be said that the project's output is unusable," said the IMED in a report.

The report, which was released last week, provided a damning picture of the execution of the project by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and the Department of Disaster Management (DDM).

Taken up in 2013 with support from the World Bank, the project was supposed to create the country's maiden poverty registry by 2017 to better target the social safety schemes and subsequently aid in accelerating poverty alleviation.

Eight years on, the database is yet to be ready and, in that time, the project has gone through four revisions that have raised its cost by 112.75 percent and duration by five years.

As of April, its physical progress stands at 92 percent and financial progress at 87 percent, according to the IMED report.

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## DHAKA-MAWA-BHANGA TOLLWAY

# Modern road, manual operation

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

As the Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga expressway was opened to traffic in March 2020, the Roads and Highways Department had over two years to introduce an automated toll collection system for motorists.

But only last week, the department appointed a joint venture firm led by Korea Expressway Corporation (KEC) and started toll collection manually from Friday. The development caused long tailbacks on the highway.

The toll collection has started even as four entries and exits do not have toll booths yet. The RHD is now collecting tolls near Dhaleshwari Bridge in Munshiganj for the Dhaka-Padma Bridge section of the highway and in Bhanga of Faridpur for Padma Bridge-Bhanga section of the highway.

As a result, a motorist has to pay for a whole section, even if they do not use the whole section. Conversely, the RHD is being deprived of revenue from vehicles that leave the highway before going through a toll plaza.

Besides, RHD started toll collection without consulting the associations of transport owners and workers. This resulted in drivers engaging in arguments with the employees at the toll plazas and causing delays for the other road users.

Traffic flow was quite normal on the expressway yesterday, but road users fear that there will be congestion during the Eid rush.

In that case, people going to their hometowns in the southwestern region during the vacation would face setbacks. The Padma Bridge has reduced travel time to some districts by two-three hours and ended the uncertainties associated with ferry services.

The Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA) also could not introduce an automated toll collection system for using the Padma Bridge and it would take six more months to launch the system.

"This has exposed their lack of planning," noted transport expert Prof Shamsul Hoque said, adding that an expressway without an automated toll collection system was rare in the world.

"The Padma Bridge and the expressway are modern structures. If we cannot introduce a modern operating system, the people will not

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## Woman gang-raped on launch

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

Three men gangraped the mother of a four-month-old baby in the cabin of a launch heading towards Dhaka from Barishal at night on June 23.

After reaching Dhaka, one of the men who is a cousin of her estranged husband, took her to Chattogram promising that he would take her to a hospital for treatment of injuries she got when she was raped, police said.

But he left the 22-year-old woman and her daughter on a street in the port city and fled.

As she didn't know the city and had little money, she went to Akbarshah Police Station, profusely bleeding from her injuries.

Police then got her admitted to Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

As her health got stable, she wrote a complaint with the help of police and sent it to Keraniganj (South) Police Station in Dhaka on June 26, accusing three men.

The police station in Dhaka then recorded the case and asked river police to investigate it.

According to the complaint, the woman and her child had been living in her parent's house in Barishal after her husband left her a few months ago.

Her husband's cousin, who is an accused in the case, convinced her to get on board the launch, saying that he would take her to her husband.

On the launch, her husband's cousin and two other men raped her multiple times in her cabin holding her baby hostage.

Assistant Commissioner

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