



**P3** Battery-run rickshaws: Danger lurks in the alleys



**P7** Commonwealth faces uncertain future after Queen's death



**P11** BD-Ireland kicks off Women's T20 WC Qualifier



**B4** Sanitaryware use expanding in rural areas

## State coffers robbed of Tk 4,697cr by Petrobangla, BPC

Finds CAG compliance report

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government has been deprived of about Tk 4,697 crore for 19 counts of irregularities by Petrobangla and Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, found an audit.

The disclosure comes after the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) pored over the books of 11 companies under Petrobangla from fiscal 2014-15 to 2016-17 and two companies of BPC for fiscal 2013-14. The findings were presented in parliament in June.

The irregularities include spending beyond the rules to buy goods and services at high prices; flouting the instructions of the finance ministry and the National Board of Revenue; and disregarding the Gas Sales Rules 2004 and 2014, the Bangladesh Gas Act 2010, Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission, the Public Procurement Act 2006 and the

Public Procurement Rules 2008.

Of the Tk 4,697 crore that was lost, Petrobangla's failure to deposit in full the value-added tax and supplementary duties, collected from the gas distribution companies, to the exchequer alone accounts for Tk 4,597.3 crore, the CAG found.

In fiscal 2016-17, Petrobangla collected VAT and SD of Tk 6,015.5 crore, which it was supposed to deposit to the exchequer.

But it deposited Tk 2,080.3 crore, keeping the rest in its accounts. There has been a 2 percent interest on the outstanding sum, which comes to Tk 334.8 crore.

So the state coffer has Tk 4,270 crore outstanding from Petrobangla, the report said.

Furthermore, in fiscal 2015-16, Jalalabad Gas Fields, Sylhet, and Bibiyana Gas Field, Habiganj, collected Tk 327.4 crore from

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PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

People who live in these squalid huts by the Poshur river know that they are inches away from becoming homeless as the river erodes its bank and threatens to wash away their homes. However, the residents of this village in Mongla, Bagerhat, some of the poorest people in the world, say that they have had to start over after losing it all multiple times over the years and they will find a place to live. The photo was taken last week.

**Dhaka should take it to UN immediately**  
**Experts say about tensions on border**

PORIMOL PALMA

Myanmar, by its actions near the border, have lately been violating international rules and posing serious threats to the sovereignty of Bangladesh, analysts have said.

They said this against the backdrop of the landing of mortar shells on the Bangladesh side over the last few weeks. Shells fired from Myanmar also killed a Rohingya man and injured five others on no-man's land on Friday.

Security and international relations experts said Bangladesh, under these circumstances, has the right to have military deterrence to ensure the safety of its people and protect its territory.

They suggested that Dhaka immediately brief

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**TENSIONS ON MYANMAR BORDER**

## Panicked, locals scramble to safety

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and MOHAMMAD ALI JINNAT, back from Naikhongchhari

Thirty-year-old Noor Hasina lives in a house in Konarpara along the Tambru border in Bandarban's Naikhongchhari upazila.

Around 8:30pm on Friday, a mortar shell suddenly hit the fence around her house. Her husband, Badiul Alam, was away from home at that time.

She left the house immediately with her four children, the youngest only four months old.

"I took shelter in a relative's home in Ghumdhum, about half a kilometre off the border," she said.

The Daily Star met her in the border area around 9:00am yesterday when she returned home to see its condition.

Like Hasina, some other families left their homes on Friday night in fear of life after a mortar shell fired from Myanmar exploded at a Rohingya camp on no-man's land near Tambru Bazar. The explosion killed a Rohingya youth and injured five other people, including two children.

"At least 35 families of Baisfari,

Paharpara, Konarpara and Majherpara areas have left their homes and taken shelter at their relatives' in different areas of Cox's Bazar," AKM Jahangir Aziz, chairman of Ghumdhum Union Parishad, told The Daily Star.

Monowara Begum, 32, a resident of Paharpara, said they could not sleep Friday night because of the sound of continuous gunshots coming from across the border.

"The sound was so loud that it felt like our home would collapse," she told this newspaper near Tambru Bazar.

Visiting the border area yesterday, these correspondents found that the situation was tense. Some local traders did not even open their shops.

Abdul Karim, a grocer at Ghumdhum Bazar, said he didn't open his shutters over worries that anything bad could happen anytime.

Meanwhile, a special one-hour closed-door security meeting was held at the Bandarban deputy commissioner's office from 3:30pm yesterday.

DC Yasmin Parvin Tibrijii, however, didn't disclose anything about the meeting.

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**DIGITAL SECURITY ACT Sued at 17, JnU student in jail**

ZYMA ISLAM and EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Sued as an adult when she was actually 17 in 2020, a Jagannath University student has been languishing in jail under the Digital Security Act for almost a month.

Her crime was hosting a Facebook webinar where a guest speaker made contentious remarks.

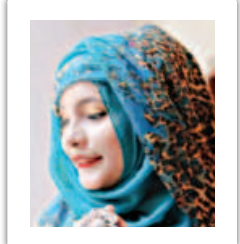
The student has already been denied bail thrice by a Dhaka court, the last being on September 15, when Dhaka Cyber Tribunal Judge Mohammad Ash Shams Jaglul Hossain rejected her petition.

Khaditajul Kubra, a student of political science at Jagannath University, was arrested on August 27 after police pressed charges against her in two cases filed two years ago.

The Kalabagan and New Market police themselves filed the cases on October 11 and October 19, 2020.

It was only when the police submitted the charge sheet and the court issued an arrest

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**Tabith hurt in attack on BNP event**  
**Barkatullah Bulu injured in Cumilla**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP leader Tabith Awal and several others were injured in an attack allegedly by ruling Awami League men during a demonstration in the capital's Banani yesterday.

The attack took place when the BNP was holding a candlelight vigil around 7:45pm protesting the recent killing of three activists during demonstrations against price hike of essentials.

The ruling party activists attacked them with sticks and threw brick chunks at them.

Tabith, a member of the BNP central executive committee, was seriously hurt, said Shairul Kabir Khan, a spokesperson of the party.

In Cumilla's Monoharganj upazila yesterday afternoon, BNP Vice Chairman Barkatullah Bulu was attacked by unidentified individuals.

Asked about the Banani incident, Officer-in-Charge Nur-e-Azam Miah of Banani Police Station said he heard that AL activists chased the BNP men away during a demonstration.

He added that they did not know whether anyone was injured.

The BNP earlier announced that it would hold a candlelight vigil between Kakoli intersection and Gulshan-2 from 7:00pm.

As BNP activists formed a line on one side of Kemal Ataturk Avenue, the AL activists began to chant slogans from the other side of the street.

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Barkatullah Bulu



Tabith Awal

**ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES**

## UN group records five more cases

Govt yet to respond

ZYMA ISLAM

Five new incidents of enforced disappearance in Bangladesh were reported to the UN Working Group on Enforced Disappearances in the last one year.

This takes the number of cases being investigated by the UN body to 81.

Two of the five cases came to the fore within the reporting year of May 2021-2022, while the other three were reported earlier.

The UN group wrote about the five cases to the government but is yet to receive a response.

Details of these cases are unknown as the group discloses the names only to the government agency it is communicating with.

According to the Hong Kong-based Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), there were 19 new reported cases of enforced disappearance within this reporting period, and four of the victims still remain missing.

AHRC keeps an account of enforced disappearances reported by the media in Bangladesh.

Of the five new cases taken up by the UN Working Group, two are considered "time-sensitive" or "urgent procedure" cases, where a person is being detained arbitrarily, and the situation warrants urgent action by the government.

This means the UN had proof that two people were being

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An empty footbridge at Banglabazar intersection in the capital as pedestrians would rather jaywalk than climb a flight of stairs. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Hospital had no clue man died falling down lift shaft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 60-year-old patient was killed after falling down a lift shaft from the ninth floor of National Institute of Cancer Research and Hospital in Mohakhali.

Even though Kalam Bepari tumbled down the shaft on Thursday morning, the hospital authorities did not notice what happened until yesterday evening, when they looked at the security camera footage at his son's request.

Kalam, a rickshaw puller from Barishal, was admitted to the hospital with stomach cancer and he was supposed to go through a surgery today.

The incident happened around 7:32am as the lift got stuck between the ninth and 10th floors while the door remained

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