



**P5** Cold taking a toll on children



**P7** Memoirs written to combat 'distortion': Harry



**P11** 'Can't recall last Bangladesh visit'



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## AI-RUN TRAFFIC SIGNAL Thoughtless, likely to fail

Say experts about DSCC move; 'no science will work unless roads expanded, discipline enforced'

HELEMUL ALAM

After spending Tk 119 crore over 15 years on traffic lights that came to nought, Dhaka South City Corporation has moved to install an artificial intelligence-driven signalling system which experts fear is destined to fail.

Prof Md Shamsul Hoque of Buet said no digital initiative would work in the city unless a proper traffic system was in place.

"You can take up as many projects as you like, but the digital system simply can't work here. It did not work before and will not work in the future.

"Our road network is not disciplined. There is no lane concept; both motorised and non-motorised vehicles ply the same road, and the flow of vehicles is much higher than the capacity of the roads. In this condition, no science will work."

But the project is already set in motion.

"The DSCC has appointed a consultant firm named EPC [Engineering and Planning Consultants Ltd] to conduct a feasibility study for running 53 of its designated traffic



Dismantling of vessels goes on near the Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge-1 in the capital's Postagola, polluting the environment. There are some designated dockyards for shipbreaking in the city, but some contractors do the job elsewhere illegally. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Fakhrul, Abbas walk out of jail



COURT CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhruddin Islam Alamgir and standing committee member Mirza Abbas walked out of jail yesterday, a month after they were arrested in a case filed over the clash between party men and police in the capital's Nayapaltan on December 7.

They were released on six month's ad-interim bail.

"We released them around 5:40pm after we received their bail orders," Suvas Kumar Ghosh, senior jail super (acting) of Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj, told The Daily Star.

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- DSCC spent Tk 119cr on traffic lights in 15yrs
- Traffic police continue to use hand signals
- Tk 55,685cr lost to city congestion last year
- Only 10pc of city areas are roads
- Not following Strategic Transport Plan blamed for jams

signal points with artificial intelligence technology," Kazi Md Borhan Uddin, superintending engineer of Traffic Engineering Circle of DSCC, told The Daily Star recently.

The city corporation has already paid EPC Tk 5 crore in consultation fees.

Borhan said they expect to get the study report within four months.

He said AI technology with multiple cameras and other devices would enable them to monitor traffic volume and act accordingly.

"But it would take time to make the technology operational as it requires funding and the government's approval," he said.

About the budget, Borhan said they have not worked on it yet.

The initiatives DSCC took in the past to control traffic include the installation of digital signal lights, countdowns for light change, solar panels to power them, and digital display boards at some major intersections.

The automatic traffic lights were first installed between 2001 and 2005, but they were hardly followed and they soon became non-functional due to poor maintenance.

At least 68 of the set of lights were meant to be synchronised but they worked independently.

In 2012-13, the DSCC restored them and launched a trial run, which failed.

Later, remote controls were given to traffic police to

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## FARDIN'S DEATH Bushra to be released from prison today Say jail authorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amatullah Bushra, an accused in a case filed over the death of Buet student Fardin Noor Parash, will walk out of jail on bail today, a day after jail officials received the bail order.

"We got the bail order this [yesterday] evening but it is too late to complete the procedure. We will release her tomorrow [today]," Obaidur Rahman, senior jail super of Kashimpur Women's Central Jail, told The Daily Star.

The private university student, who was arrested in the capital's Banasree two months ago, secured bail on Sunday.

Judge Tahsin Iftekhar of Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court-7 issued the bail order.

On November 10 last year, Rampura police arrested Bushra, a friend of Fardin, from her Banasree house soon after a murder case was filed against her.

She was sent to jail on November 16 after her bail petition was rejected following the completion of her five-day police remand.

Fardin, a third-year

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## Bangabandhu comes home, completes victory



MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

It was the British Royal Air Force comet jet that, on January 10, 1972, carried Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to his freed motherland -- the country he had led to independence.

People had been in a state of euphoria since the Pakistani forces surrendered on December 16, 1971.

However, a sense of incompleteness prevailed as the undisputed leader of liberation, Bangabandhu, was not there with them yet.

Sheikh Mujib was kept in solitary confinement in Pakistan

since the Liberation War began on March 26. Even after defeat, Pakistani authorities were delaying his release, stoking tension and uncertainty among the people of the world about his fate.

But on this day 51 years ago, there he was, clad in an overcoat, emerging out of the plane around 1:44pm.

How much his arrival meant to the country was evident when people even went on to breach security arrangements to be close to their beloved leader.

Even just on the staircase, Mujib was surrounded with love and embraces from his people.

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## 'BUYING 14 HOUSES IN US' ACC can look into allegations against Wasa MD

Says HC; Taqseem bins claims; ACC to seek info from BFIU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday said the Anti-Corruption Commission could scrutinise the allegations about Dhaka Wasa Managing Director Taqseem A Khan buying 14 homes in the USA.

The graft watchdog may submit the progress report on the issue to this court, the HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Khizir Hayat Lizu said after ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan placed a news report, run by a Bangla daily yesterday regarding the allegations.

Khurshid prayed to the HC bench to direct the ACC on a suo moto (voluntary) rule to submit the progress report to it within 15 days, saying that the commission was probing two allegations in this regard.

The HC said it won't pass any order or issue any rule as the ACC was conducting enquiries into the allegations.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Khurshid said he has already informed the commission about the HC order.

Contacted, the Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) MD said the allegations against him of buying 14 homes in the USA were "hundred percent false".

Taqsem said he has been a US citizen for many years and that he holds dual citizenship, but neither he nor his relatives own mentionable properties there.

"I have nothing there [US]. My relatives don't have wealth either. I have declared detailed information in my income tax file in the US," he said.

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

People risking their lives by going over the road divider to reach the other side, while a footbridge is visible just a few yards away in the capital's Farmgate area. Such dangerous acts often lead to tragic accidents.

## IGP's tenure extended for yr and a half

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday extended the tenure of Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun for one and a half years under contract.

He was to retire tomorrow.

The public administration ministry issued a circular, signed by its deputy secretary Rafiqul Islam, in this regard.

Police sources said it is the first time that an

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## 33<sup>rd</sup> Death Anniversary

DEATH: 10<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 1990

We deeply mourn the death of our beloved mother "Late Masuda Begum wife of Late Mr. Abul Khair, founder of Abul Khair Group (Abul Co.)". Today with due respect, we remember her works, ideals and memories and pray to Almighty for His divine blessings.

We request all our relatives and well-wishers to pray for her eternal peace.

BELOVED SONS & DAUGHTERS