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A slow-moving three-wheeler plies the Dhaka-Aricha highway, while a container-carrying truck moves in the opposite direction on the same road. The situation narrates the ever-present threats on the highway, and the authority's lack of intervention in the matter, leading to the possibility of an accident. This photo was taken in Savar's Hemayetpur area recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Allocate Tk 500cr for indigenous people

Demands Adibashi Union ahead of budget

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh National Adibashi Union yesterday demanded a budget allocation of Tk 500 crore in the upcoming national budget and the establishment of a separate ministry dedicated to the welfare of the indigenous communities of the country.

They came up with the demands at a press conference held at the Mukti Bhaban at Purana Paltan in the capital.

Highlighting the economic hardship faced by the indigenous people, Dibalok Singh, chief advisor of the union, said over 80 percent of indigenous people residing in the plainlands live below the poverty line.

In the Chittagong Hill Tracts region, 65 percent of the indigenous population is classified as poor, a number that increased to 92 percent during the pandemic.

Singh emphasised that despite the annual increase in the budget size, the livelihoods of indigenous people have not seen significant improvements, indicating a lack of focus and friendly budgetary measures for their welfare.

"The state structure is influenced by the perspectives of the majority population, which has resulted in neglecting the indigenous people. In previous budgets, there were specific allocations for the indigenous community, but unfortunately,

these allocations have been reduced in recent years," he said.

Furthermore, there is a lack of a separate ministry or directorate dedicated to addressing the issues faced by the indigenous people in the plainlands, resulting in excluding them from the benefits of social safety net programmes.

**“ In previous budgets, there were specific allocations for the indigenous community, but unfortunately, these allocations have been reduced in recent years.**

DIBALOK SINGH  
Chief Advisor of Adibashi Union

Even though per capita income of the general population is reaching USD 2,824, the same situation is not reflected for the indigenous community.

Adibashi leaders demanded to establish a permanent rationing system for indigenous people and bridge the gap between the mainstream population and the indigenous community.

Additionally, they demanded that

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TARIQUE, ZUBAIDA  
GRAFT CASE  
3 prosecution witnesses testify

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Three more prosecution witnesses gave their statements before a Dhaka court yesterday in a graft case filed against BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman and his wife Zubaida Rahman.

Judge Md Asaduzzaman of Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court recorded their statements.

Meanwhile, a section of pro-BNP lawyers led by Masud Ahmed Talukder appeared before the court and protested the May 25 decision for fixing five consecutive days for recording statements.

When asked by the judge whether there was any bar to fixing five back-to-back days to record statements, the lawyers replied in the negative.

The lawyers then left the court and held a rally

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## 'Development without planning pointless'

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Government agencies are emphasising only development projects without any focus on planning and research, prominent transport expert Prof Shamsul Hoque said yesterday.

"The pre-condition of development is proper planning. However, this is something that we are lacking in," he said.

Prof Shamsul, the director of Accident Research Institute and faculty member of the Department of Civil Engineering of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), criticised the authorities over their dependency on foreign consultants for the implementation of the development projects.

He was speaking at a workshop, titled "Planning Approaches for Development an Efficient and Sustainable Transport System", as the keynote speaker.

The workshop was organised by Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA) at its Tejgaon

office in the capital. It was attended by officials of different government agencies.

Prof Shamsul said most government agencies do not have a planning unit or if there is a planning unit, it would be very weak.

**“ The pre-condition of development is proper planning. However, this is something that we are lacking in.**

PROF SHAMSUL HOQUE  
Transport expert

"The existing planning units in a few agencies are relatively weaker. All countries that have shown tremendous development over the years have emphasised proper planning. They have strong planning and research wings in their relevant government agencies," he said.

Referring to the almost-

complete Purbachal Expressway, Prof Shamsul said the expressway is being built to facilitate communication with Purbachal area. However, more than 90 percent of Purbachal falls on one side of the expressway, which is expected to increase the turning proportion of vehicles using the expressway.

"This is an absurd idea, to say the least," he said.

Criticising the over-dependency on foreign consultants for development projects, he said, "The idea that foreigners can solve all our problems has no logic or reasonings behind it. The over-dependency on foreign consultants also hampers the improvement of the capacity of our own agencies," said Prof Shamsul.

"Authorities often think that the 'capital intensive projects' are the only ones worthy of attention. We should come out of this way of thinking," he added.

Prof Shamsul also said

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'EC to get stricter if situation demands'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Election Commissioner Rashida Sultana yesterday said they will take "stricter action", if needed, to ensure free and fair polls in the country.

In addition, voters showing up to polling stations and being able to cast votes freely will be their major objectives in the coming elections, she added.

She was speaking to the press at her office in the capital.

Asked about the commission's satisfaction over the city corporation elections, Rashida said it is not EC's responsibility to see who is joining the elections or not.

"If all joint elections that will make it competitive and we will also enjoy working. Even if they do not come to the polls, we have to conduct it. We cannot stop. We do not really

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KHALEDA GRAFT CASE  
Charge framing hearing on July 13

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday set July 13 for hearing on charge framing in the Barapukuria coalmine graft case filed against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and six others.

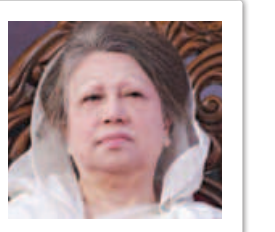
Judge Md Akhtaruzzaman of the Special Judge's Court 2 of Dhaka passed the order after a petition was filed with the court on behalf of Khaleda, Zaynal Abedin Meshbah, one of her lawyers, told The Daily Star.

In the petition, Meshbah said Khaleda, who is now out of jail after an executive order of the government, is unwell and she was taking treatment at her Gulshan residence. So, the hearing should be adjourned, he said.

On February 26, 2008, the Anti-Corruption Commission filed the case with Shahbagh Police Station, accusing 16 people, including Khaleda and 10 of her former cabinet colleagues, of taking Tk 159 crore in kickbacks on the Barapukuria coalmine deal awarded to the highest bidder.

The seven accused, including former ministers M Saifur Rahman and Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan died during the trial, while Jamaat leaders Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed and Motiur Rahman Nizami were executed on charges of committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War.

So, the nine were dropped from the trial.



Nipun gets anticipatory bail from HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted anticipatory bail to BNP leader Nipun Roy Chowdhury for three months in a case filed in connection with an Awami League-BNP clash in Keraniganj on May 26.

The HC asked Nipun, a member of BNP's central executive committee, to surrender before the lower court concerned in the three months.

The bench of Justice Md Habibul Gani and Justice Ahmed Sohel passed the order.

Earlier in the day, Nipun Roy, on a wheelchair and with part of her head

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Rally, counter-rally at SC

Pro-BNP lawyers hold demo against Taposh's recent comments; AL-backed ones call the protest 'anarchy'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Jatiotabadi Ainjibi Forum, a body of pro-BNP lawyers, yesterday demanded immediate arrest and punishment of Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh for, what they said, his slamming the judiciary and threatening to kill civil society members.

The BJAF leaders placed the demand at a meeting held at the main gate of the Supreme Court after they staged demonstration and formed a human chain in the afternoon.

Around a few hundred pro-BNP lawyers joined the events.

BJAF President AJ Mohammad Ali, former SCBA secretaries AM Mahub Uddin Khokon, Md Bodruddoza Badal, Md Ruhul Quddus Kazal, BJAF secretary general Kayser Kamal, its SC unit president Abdul Zabbar Bhuiyan and general secretary Gazi Kamrul Islam Sajal, among others, spoke on the occasion.

AJ Mohammad Ali announced demonstration programmes at all the bar association premises on Wednesday.

"He (Taposh) has scandalised the Supreme Court and he has to be brought to book," he said.

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## DSCC to issue license for kitchen markets

DIPAN NANDY

Dhaka South City Corporation authorities have decided to bring all the kitchen markets under licensing to properly monitor those.

At present, there are specific guidelines or regulations for the over 100 such markets under DSCC's jurisdiction.

Under the new regulations, owners have to apply through a prescribed form with a free of Tk 500 for establishing and operating kitchen markets. A joint application has to be made if the owner holds more than one licence.

Licenses for the operation of markets will be valid for a year with the annual service for markets adjacent to central roads being Tk 215 for per square metre while that of markets on smaller roads being Tk 108.

A seven-member committee will be appointed for each market to oversee all operations, including price monitoring, maintenance, and development.

In addition to the



forementioned rules, DSCC has also directed the owners to list the prices of goods on a board.

DSCC has also appointed a nine-member committee to ensure that all the private markets under its area are running smoothly and are well maintained.

The committee will also be taking care of licensing applications and regulating the number of available markets.

Several other directives are

also being set by the corporation. These include ensuring that the market is built around an at least 6.10 metres wide road, the market lanes are 1.52 metres wide, restrooms and handwashing stations, water supply, sewerage and firefighting systems.

Kitchen markets can be established and operated on private property but not on roads, railway lines, walkways or roadsides.

To further confirm that the markers are licensed, DSCC's property division has already carried out inspections at 23 markets, including Banashree Kacha Bazar, Shantinagar Kacha Bazar, Kilgaon Nou Bazar, and Nawab Yousuf Market Kacha Bazar.

"New owners have to comply with the rules. Strict action will be taken against rule violators," said Russell Sabrin, chief property officer of DSCC.

Welcoming the corporation's initiative, Abdul Rahim, a shopkeeper in Shantinagar Kacha Bazar, said "I just learned that our market is not authorised by the city corporation. We used to live in fear of eviction but now, we can get licences to hold on to our businesses without having to sweat."

"Small vendors and hawkers are usually driven away if they stop at a location for too long. We have no other option but to walk around and sell our goods. However, I believe we will now have an authorised space for business," said Alauddin, a vegetable seller in Gendaria.

**PRAYER TIMING**  
MAY 30

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-05	12-45	5-00	6-43	8-05
JAMAAT 4-40	1-15	5-15	6-47	8-35

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION