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## Govt planning to turn DMCH into a 4,000-bed hospital

Says PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government has undertaken a new plan to modernise Dhaka Medical College Hospital so that 4,000 patients can be treated at a time there.

"We have already prepared a new plan to develop the hospital into a larger, more beautiful, and more modern establishment. We have prepared the plan so that 4,000 patients can

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The abandoned compound of the Mosquito Control Department, where an empty two-storey building and neglected tin sheds stand in eerie stillness. Water accumulates after every rainfall, creating a breeding ground for mosquitoes, meaning the very place set up to combat these disease-carrying insects inadvertently fosters their proliferation. This photo was taken recently in Old Dhaka's Dhakeshwari area.

PHOTO: STAR

## MOSQUITO CONTROL DEPARTMENT Of empty drums and abandoned building

DIPAN NANDY

Nestled in Old Dhaka's Dhakeshwari area, a two-storey building stands, evoking an eerie atmosphere.

Many empty drums fill its premises, while doors of most of the 17 rooms inside the building remain tightly shut. Two abandoned cars lie in the parking, with stagnant water on different parts of the vehicles. In front of the building, two dilapidated tin sheds, surrounded by debris, remain as a testament to a haunting stillness.

A signboard at the gate reads "Moshok Nibaroni Daptor," which is a government department dedicated to controlling mosquitoes. Ironically, the very drums, the locked rooms, the abandoned cars and tinsheds that fill the compound create a breeding ground for these disease-carrying insects.

In a country plagued by annual dengue outbreaks, this irony is cause for concern, according to experts.

As per its website, the Dhaka Mosquito Control Department was established under the health ministry in 1948, shifted to the Local Government Department in 1980, and is currently under the authority of the Dhaka city corporations.

At its inception, the department employed a total of 396 personnel. However, at present, there are 241 personnel working, with 155 positions remaining vacant.

The majority of the current workers are engaged in the field, applying mosquito repellent sprays across various parts of Dhaka.

This indicates that there are no staff members present at the department's office, rendering it abandoned, which this correspondent found proof of in a recent visit.

This begs the question: what purpose does the two-storey building serve, other than creating an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes?

Contacted, Shamsul Alam, the

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## Why his sentence should not be enhanced

Asks HC on casino 'kingpin' Salim Prodhan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule asking the respondents to explain in four weeks why the jail sentence of casino "kingpin" Salim Prodhan should not be enhanced in a corruption case.

He was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment by a Dhaka court on April 30 in the case filed for amassing Tk 57.79 crore illegally and laundering about Tk 22 crore.

Salim and the state has been made respondents to the rule, Anti-Corruption Commission's lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told

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## Use social media in family planning campaigns

Speakers tell roundtable marking World Population Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP) should adopt a new strategy regarding mass media campaigns, taking into consideration the significant increase of social media users, said speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

They said the current family planning campaign is still relying on approaches from the 80s and 90s, which are no longer suitable considering the changing context.

The discussion, titled "Bangladesh Family Planning Program: What Women and Girls Want Matters," was jointly organised by Ipas Bangladesh and The Daily Star to mark World Population Day 2023 at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka.

Syed Rubayet, country coordinator of Ipas Bangladesh, during his keynote presentation said the DGFP has to change its strategy. He pointed out the higher rates of mobile phone usage, secondary education, and access to electricity as factors that need to be considered.

Rubayet also drew attention to the decline in women's engagement with mass media over the past two decades.

The Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS) data indicated that the proportion of women aged

15-49 who received family planning messages through mass media dropped from 46.5 percent in 1993-94 to 26 percent in 2017-18.

However, there has been a significant increase in social media usage, with an average of 50.3

marriage and early pregnancy and stressed the importance of addressing the needs of elderly women and promoting the use of long-acting birth control methods.

During the event, Golam

Mortoza, editor of The Daily Star



Speakers at the roundtable yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

million active users in Bangladesh in 2022. Surprisingly, only 0.6 percent of women received family planning messages through social media, according to the BDHS 2017-18.

He further pointed out that 50 percent of women aged 20-24 during the survey were married before the age of 18, and 24 percent of women aged 15-19 had experienced pregnancy, according to the BDHS 2022.

Rubayet emphasised the need to urgently address issues like child

Bangla, stressed the importance of conducting research to explore effective strategies for utilising social media in family planning and birth control campaigns.

Prof Mainul Islam, former chairman of the Department of Population Sciences at the University of Dhaka, expressed concern that the current rate of child marriage would hinder the achievement of half of the sustainable development goals.

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GRAMEEN KALYAN PROFIT-SHARE

SC asks HC to dispose of rule in two months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday asked the High Court to dispose of in two months a rule that questioned the legality of the Labour Appellate Tribunal verdict which justified the demand of 106 former workers of Grameen Kalyan for a part of its net profit since 2006 to 2013.

Grameen Kalyan is a non-profitable and charitable company established by Nobel Laureate Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus.

The Appellate

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## ANTI-MOSQUITO DRIVE Four state-run companies fined Tk 20 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka North City Corporation mobile court yesterday fined four state-run companies Tk 20 lakh for finding Aedes larvae on their premises.

The drive was conducted in the capital's Karwan Bazar. Bangladesh Oil, Gas and Mineral Corporation (Petrobangla), an under-construction building of Jamuna Oil Company Limited, Trading Corporation of Bangladesh, and Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation were fined Tk 5 lakh each on the third day of the drive.

"Spotting Aedes larvae at government offices, especially Petrobangla, despite multiple warnings and directives, is frustrating and disappointing," said DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam.

Petrobangla Chairman Zanendra Nath Sarker said, "The construction company was instructed to clean the area. They will be held responsible as the larvae were found while they were carrying out the construction work. Officials from relevant departments also have to share the blame."

**PRAYER TIMING**  
JULY 11

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:10	12:45	5:00	6:55	8:17
JAMAAT 4:45	1:15	5:15	7:00	8:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Shielding themselves from the scorching sun with an umbrella, a family walks past a structure that used to be a passenger shed near the Kamalapur container depot yesterday. Due to a lack of maintenance, the ceiling of this shed fell off a long time ago, and now just the rusted frame remains in place, unable to serve its purpose.

## 6,02,884 illegal connections disconnected in 20 months

Says Titas MD

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Titans Gas Transmission and Distribution Company conducted 28,398 drives and disconnected 6,02,884 illegal connections in the last 20 months in Dhaka and Mymensingh divisions.

The drives were conducted from October 2021 to June 2023 and the length of the illegal connections were 668km, said Titas Managing Director Md Harunur Rashid Mullah.

While addressing a press conference in Titas office, he said Titas spent Tk 6.46 crore in conducting those drives and recovered around Tk 312 crore in arrears.

They also fined Tk 91.25 crore during the drives.

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