



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Construction work of a new prison goes on in Khulna city. While the cost of the project increased several times to eventually stand at Tk 288 crore, the work still could not be completed even after 12 years.

NEW KHULNA DISTRICT JAIL

Construction works drag on for 12 years

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

The construction of a modern prison of the Khulna District Jail has remained incomplete for 12 years.

The old prison of Khulna District Jail, located in the city's Jaikhan Ghat along the bank of Bhairab River, was built in 1906. It has some 1,600-2,000 prisoners at present against a capacity to keep 608 inmates.

The Directorate of Prisons in 2008 took the initiative to build the new jail to provide modern facilities to inmates.

Approved by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnc) in 2011, the Tk 144 crore project to construct the prison started in 2012 on around 30 acres of land in Chowk Mathurabad under Dumuria upazila, near Joy Bangla Intersection on Khulna City Bypass Road, slated to be completed by 2016.

However, while the cost of the project increased several times to eventually stand at Tk 288 crore, the work still could not be completed even after 12 years.

According to sources, the project got delayed due to different reasons including change of location, and complications regarding land acquisition.

Since June 6, 2017, the project has been revised and extended a total of six times, with June 30, 2024 set as the new deadline, which has also been crossed.

As per the project's masterplan,

the new jail was designed to accommodate 4,000 prisoners. However, the infrastructures under the project were later revised to keep 2,000 inmates.

So far, a total of 52 concrete structures including 47 buildings with one floor to six floors have been constructed inside the project area.

The structures include barracks for different categories of prisoners, prison guards' quarters, and observation towers. Each prisoners' barrack has a wall around it.

According to the project office, the new prison is being built as a correctional facility. Here under trial and sentenced prisoners will be kept separately. There are also separate barracks for juvenile and female prisoners. There will be separate hospitals, motivation centres, work-sheds and day-care centres for female inmates.

Visiting the project site recently, this correspondent saw that although the infrastructures have been constructed, other works including pavement and walkways, internal and connecting roads, fitting grilles, fences, and drains are still incomplete.

However, the Public Works Department sources said the work is almost complete and it will be handed over to the authorities soon.

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There will also be a 50-bed hospital for male prisoners, as well as a school for the children of prison guards, a library, a dining room, a modern saloon, a laundry, recreation centre, and separate prayer rooms for male and female inmates. Kudrat-e-Khuda, president of Shushashaner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan) in Khulna, said, "Even after 12 years, the construction of the new jail is not completed yet. This is unthinkable in a fair state. Corruption is associated with project delays. Prolonged projects only pave way for more corruption."

"Hopefully the project will be completed soon. The new prison will enhance the district jail's capacity to keep more inmates," said Mohammad Rafiqul Kader, jail superintendent of Khulna District Jail.

Contacted, Md Asaduz Zaman, executive engineer of PWD Division 2, Khulna, said, "The project is almost 99 percent completed and will be handed over to the authorities concerned soon."

RECENT VIOLENCE SCBA president demands UN probe, secretary blames it on BNP-Jamaat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pro-BNP lawyers, led by the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon, and Awami League backed lawyers, led by SCBA Secretary Shah Monjurul Hoque, yesterday held two separate press conferences, regarding the current state of the country.

Khokon demanded that the ongoing curfew be lifted, along with the withdrawal of armed forces and a stop to "government's control on media".

"The government has already filed cases against lakhs of people. Around 13,000 people have been wrongfully arrested and students are being arrested by house-to-house searches. Political activists are being arrested in order to give political colour to this movement. We support the mass inquiry commission formed under the leadership of Justice MA Matin and rights activist Sultana Kamal," he said.

"We are demanding an inquiry into every incident of killings and injuries under the supervision of the United Nations. We think that hundreds of people have been killed in a planned manner."

"We are strongly demanding to amend the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act and to arrange speedy trial of those accused for the crimes against humanity and human rights violations," he said.

SCBA Secretary Shah Monjurul Hoque, at their event, said, "During the quota reform protests, the BNP-Jamaat-Shibir, relying on ordinary students, wreaked havoc across the country and destroyed important state structures."

"The government sincerely stood by the families of the people injured and killed in this unexpected incident and accepted all the demands of the students."

He said the SCBA is pledge-bound to protect the country's independence, sovereignty, state resources, law and order and public life. Therefore, this association protests against the anti-national activities of the anti-independence circle.

Govt now a 'public enemy' Says Fakhru

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday said the existential crisis of the government is gradually deepening as it has now become a "public enemy" by carrying out "genocide" to suppress student protests.

In a statement, he called upon all to take part in the ongoing student-led protests to end injustices by removing the "fascist" Awami League government.

"The government, now isolated from people, has become a public enemy by committing ruthless and barbaric attacks and genocide," he said.

Fakhru said the indiscriminate killings to subdue the movement are a crime against humanity and punishable by International Criminal Court.

He also called for the immediate and unconditional release of those arrested, withdrawal of the curfew, return of the army to their barracks, lifting of restrictions on gatherings, and reopening of educational institutions.

DEATHS OF 4 CHILDREN

Petition seeks HC order to form judicial commission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday filed a writ petition with the High Court seeking its order on the government to form a judicial commission to probe four children's deaths in the violence centring quota reform protests.

Advocate Taimur Alam Khondaker submitted the petition as public interest litigation and prayed to the court to direct the government to give Tk 1 crore each to the deceaseds' family members.

The four deceased children are four-year-old Abdul Ahad from Rajarbag of Jatrabari; 15-year-old Nayima Sultana from Uttara; 11-year-old Safayat Shamir

from Mirpur and 6-year-old Ria Gope from Narayanganj, according to the petition.

He said in the petition that the minors were killed in gunshots although they did not participate in the protests.

The state and its law enforcing agencies have failed to protect their lives, the petitioner stated in the petition.

Under article 32, "No person shall be deprived of life or personal liberty save in accordance with law", the petition mentioned.

Advocate Taimur Alam Khondaker told The Daily Star that the HC may hold hearing of the petition today.

Killings during quota protests

FROM PAGE 3 compete for government jobs is not nonpolitical; rather, it is a political one.

"But instead of going towards a political solution to this question, the government first wanted to ignore it. It later resorted to repression," he said.

"The government, without going to the problem's root, is now

saying they will slap a ban on this party or that party. This will not even scratch the surface of the main problem. Rather, this will make the problem more complex," he added.

"The problem should be resolved politically. For the first step in this political solution, the government should seek an unconditional apology

and resign. Without this step, we cannot take any step towards a new system," he observed.

"A safe learning environment must be restored in the universities. If our students can't come, whom will we teach, what will we teach?" Salimullah asked, demanding the release of all arrested students.

Advertisement for EDCU (Edible Contraceptive Unit) with a table listing products, prices, and specifications. The table includes columns for serial number, product name, brand, price, and quantity. Products listed include Sterile Contraceptive Product Manufacturing, Vial Washing and Depyrogenation tunnel, and Vial Filling-Sealing Machine.

BASIC Bank Limited advertisement featuring a tender notice for air conditioning services at various branches. The notice includes details about the tendering process, dates, and contact information.

Advertisement for the national television award (জাতীয় চলচ্চিত্র পুরস্কার-২০২৩) for best performance in a supporting role. It includes the name of the award, the winner's name (Abanindya Bose), and details about the ceremony.