



A boy sets up a bamboo-made fish trap in the water near the Arial Khan river in Barishal Sadar Upazila to catch small fish. The photo was taken in the Taltoli area yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Project gets approval, deadline

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decommission the British-era single-lane rail and road bridge there.

A feasibility study, financed by South Korea, was conducted in December 2015 that recommended building a two-lane road and single-lane rail bridge.

A DPP for the new bridge with an estimated cost of Tk 1,163.27 crore was placed before an Ecneec meeting in August 2018, which decided that it would build a dedicated rail bridge with double lines. The DPP was not approved at that time.

In 2019, another feasibility study was launched, but it was suspended as well. In the meantime, BR continued to go back and forth over the design.

Another Korea-funded study was launched in 2021, and it preliminarily recommended a double-decker bridge with a double-lane road on top and a dual-gauge double-

line rail line on the bottom.

But the Prime Minister's Office in August 2022 directed that the bridge be single-decker with a double line dual-gauge rail line and double-lane road, sources said.

Finally, the Ecneec, with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus in the chair, approved the project.

The rail authority will now float a tender to hire contractors and consultants and is expected to start physical work in 2026, and the works will take four years, said a BR official.

South Korea will provide Tk 7,125 crore as loan for the project.

THREE OTHER PROJECTS APPROVED

Ecneec yesterday also approved the second revision of Matarbari Port Development Project.

After the revision, the project cost rose to Tk 24,381.40 crore, Tk 6,604.24 crore more than the deadline being June 2030.

the deadline has been set for December 2029.

Chittagong Port Authority and Roads and Highways Department are jointly implementing the project.

The second revision of SASEC-2 Road Connectivity Project was also approved.

After the revision, the project cost was set at Tk 19,056.61 crore, Tk 7,157.6 crore more than the original estimate, and the deadline has been set for December 2026.

RHD is implementing the project to turn the 190km road from Elenga of Tangail to Rangpur into a four-lane highway with service lanes.

Ecneec also approved a project titled Resilient Urban and Territorial Development Project.

The Local Government Engineering Department will implement the Tk 5,901.22 crore project, with the deadline being June 2029.

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They killed my son for speaking

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the younger brother of Abrar Fahad, said, "When my brother posted [a Facebook status critical of India], I told him that the Chhatra League would attack him for writing such things. But he replied that someone had to speak up."

Faiyaj noted that Abrar believed, as a second-year student, he faced comparatively less risk in speaking out than a fresher would.

Additionally, Faiyaj said Fahad trusted his roommates to support him if anything went wrong.

"Later, it turned out that the main culprit was his roommate, who had tagged him as affiliated with Shibir. My question is: how can anyone advocate for forgiveness for an organisation that produces such brutal killers?" Faiyaj asked.

Abrar's father Barkat Ullah said, "My son was murdered after enduring torture for five hours on this day. My son was targeted and killed by Chhatra League miscreants for speaking out against injustice."

He called for the maximum punishment for those involved and urged the authorities to ensure that no one else has to sacrifice their life like his son did.

Hasnat Abdullah, a coordinator of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, said a clear decision must be made regarding those who have perpetrated violence on universities for the past 16 years.

He emphasised the need to bring those responsible for oppression to justice.

It will be formed

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said media freedom is non-negotiable for the interim government.

Shafiqul called for greater activism among journalists to drive reform in the sector.

"Traditional activism has failed because journalist leaders have accepted government plots in areas like Baridhara, Purbachal, and Uttara. They've secured licenses for underground newspapers and exploited journalists for their own benefit," he said.

He urged field level journalists to speak out against these practices.

Faruk Wasif, director general of the Bangladesh Press Institute, said despite being a part of the "fourth estate" of the country, journalists have long been overlooked.

He proposed that media owners should be restricted

to holding only one media license, adding, "We must put an end to the flow of black money into the media."

He also highlighted the low wages of journalists, saying, "Some say journalists are often paid less than garment workers. But it's because garment workers speak out against injustices, they take to the streets -- they continue to bleed even today."

"But while journalists are constantly call for higher wages, what have they and their leaders actually done to address this?" he asked.

In her keynote speech, Jimi Amir, convenor of the Media Support Network, outlined seven challenges confronting the profession and proposed several solutions for the reform commission to consider in order to enhance professionalism in the sector.

Ensure safe, inclusive

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educational curriculum," she said.

Dr Sayed Rubayet, country director at IPAS Bangladesh, stressed that ensuring workplace safety requires robust protocols and a serious focus on safety policies.

"If half the population continues to endure daily humiliation, we risk becoming a paralysed society, and we are already witnessing the consequences," he stated.

He criticised the government's failure to enforce the 2009 High Court guidelines, noting,

"The guidelines

on workplace safety have not been effectively enforced in government offices.

This inaction violates the court's orders and remains largely unaddressed."

He underscored the need to intervene in the education system, as family and societal norms often normalise gender-based violence (GBV).

He also noted that comprehensive sexuality education has not been adequately implemented in schools, leading to its perception as a taboo subject.

Shafquat Haider, chairman of the Council for Communications & IT, highlighted challenges faced by teenage and lactating mothers.

In factories, these mothers often experience harassment, lack sufficient time to care for their children, and are sometimes forced to work night shifts, he said.

At home, teenagers face pressure to have children before they are ready, which constitutes violence, he added.

Tahsinah Ahmed, executive director of BYLC, emphasised that harassment begins at home and continues as individuals

move toward the workplace.

She highlighted the psychosocial pressure women face across all socio-economic backgrounds.

MA Akher, director of the Department of Youth Development, pointed out that women comprise half of the population, yet many are excluded from government youth development projects because they are married off before 18.

"It's essential for government projects to be accountable to ensure they genuinely help the intended beneficiaries," he said.

Joya Shikdar, executive director of Somporker Noya Setu, highlighted the neglect of sexual and reproductive health and rights for transgender and intersex communities, ignoring their unique adolescent challenges.

She questioned the government's commitment to inclusivity and criticised the lack of sensitisation regarding these employees in workplaces, which leads to harassment.

The speakers also emphasised the media's crucial role in creating harassment-free work environments by promoting good practices and raising awareness about the impacts of workplace harassment.

Abdur Rahim, director of Educo Bangladesh; Dina Alsana, co-founder and COO of Vertical Innovations; Md Adnan Hossain, executive director of It's Humanity Foundation; Hamid Ibne Habib, assistant manager at BYLC; Tasfiyah Jalil, senior coordinator at Brac University; and Nazra Sabet, senior director and CEO at Friendship Colour of Chars, were among the speakers at the event, which was moderated by Tanjim Ferdous, in charge of NGO and Foreign Missions at The Daily Star.

MJF concerned

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girls' school and why, instead of being dismissed, he was reinstated.

"The ongoing investigation must look into these factors," the statement said.

Shaheen Anam also condemned the mob's actions in beating the accused teacher to death, saying that he should have been tried according to the law.

She called for a review of the recruitment process for male teachers in girls' schools and the mandatory implementation of a system of referral checks.

Additionally, she demanded the enforcement of the High Court directive on sexual harassment in all educational institutions and called for the enactment of a law to prevent sexual harassment, making it a crime punishable by law.

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Yesterday, the same judge also issued travel bans on former Awami League minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury and his wife Rukhmila Zaman; Chowdhury Nafeez Sarafat, former chairman of Padma Bank; and Mahmud Mostofa Jilani, senior assistant vice-president of Premier Bank, in connection with corruption allegations.

The judge also sent copies of the orders to the special superintendent of police (immigration) of the Special Branch for the next course of action.

Travel ban

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PRAYER TIMING

OCTOBER 8

Faz Zohr Asr Magrib Esha

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JAMAAT 5-20 1-15 4-30 5-56 8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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