

## Old Dhaka matters

Speakers call for structural reforms, preserving heritage sites

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

If Old Dhaka is declared a recreational zone and maintained properly, it can become a significant asset for the country's tourism industry, speakers said at a discussion yesterday.

They also urged the government and relevant authorities to take immediate steps to preserve heritage sites in the capital.

They made the remarks at a public lecture titled "Dhaka Outlook", organised by The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre.

Highlighting the potential of Old Dhaka as a major tourist attraction, architect Taimur Islam, CEO of Urban Study Group and convener of Save Puran Dhaka Campaign, demanded structural reforms within the responsible authorities to ensure effective preservation.

"With the formation of a new government following a mass uprising, we have high expectations for saving Dhaka," he said.

Taimur said while the city has seen gradual migration and expansion over the last 30 to 40 years, the growth of its infrastructure has not kept pace with the population increase.



Speakers at a public lecture titled "Dhaka Outlook", organised by The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

"Issues like traffic and pollution have unfortunately become Dhaka's identity. However, it hasn't truly developed into a functional metropolis. People are increasingly considering alternative cities," he added.

"We even faced cases and physical assaults while campaigning to save heritage sites. The then governments never understood how invaluable this city's tourism would be, if they took care of it properly," he also said.

Talking about media's evolution, filmmaker Ashfaq Nipun said, "The media landscape is overwhelmingly Dhaka-centric. It seems, if someone wants to make a mark in the media, there's no alternative but to be in Dhaka. Most of the content focuses on stories from Dhaka, which limits the media's representation of the entire country."

He also talked about the oversaturation in the entertainment industry, saying that Bangladesh does not need 40 television channels, given the shortage of quality producers.

"This has created a chaotic media landscape, resulting in only a few quality productions," he added.

Ashfaq further said a certain kind of religious fundamentalism is on the rise recently.

"We must fight any form of fundamentalism through art and culture, meaning the traditions and customs that define our way of life," he stressed.

"While laws can temporarily suppress fundamentalism, for a lasting solution and to build a humane society, art and culture must be brought into this space," he added.

Shafiqul Alam, press secretary to the chief adviser, reminisced about his childhood experiences in different areas of Dhaka. "The tension and anxiety regarding religion or other issues citizens see in Dhaka today are quite similar to what I saw in my young age," he said.

"While Dhaka has changed, walking through its streets still feels like a journey back in time. To me, Dhaka is still like a fairytale city," Shafiqul added.

The Daily Star organised the lecture to spotlight the evolution of Dhaka's landscape, culture, cinema, and governance. Around 50 young registered participants attended the session.



Russian Ambassador Alexander V Mantyskiy pays a farewell call on Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the latter's office in Tejgaon yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

## Yunus seeks more Russian investment

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus has assured Russian ambassador that Dhaka will resolve the payment issues over Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant.

"We will work together," he told Russian Ambassador Alexander V Mantyskiy when he paid a farewell call on the chief adviser at his Tejgaon office yesterday, according to the press wing of the Chief Adviser's Office.

About \$809 million has piled up in a Bangladesh Bank escrow account to repay loans and interest for the Russia-funded Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant.

Escrow is an arrangement for a third party to hold the assets of a transaction temporarily. The assets are kept in a third-party account and are only released when all terms of the agreement have been met.

Bangladesh Bank had to make this arrangement

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## 'Discrimination against women still persists'

Speakers call for ensuring empowerment, raising voice against extremism



Participants at the event yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The mode and nature of discrimination against women may have changed, but the discrimination itself persists in the country, said speakers at an event yesterday.

Rasheda K Chowdhury, executive director of Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), said, "I want to tell the government, which came to power through a movement against discrimination, that the type and nature of discrimination against women have evolved, and it

has not disappeared. We have not yet succeeded in eliminating the disparity between men and women."

She made these remarks at an event titled "Women's Empowerment: Celebrating the Success of the Women's Voice and Leadership Bangladesh Project," held at a hotel in the capital.

The event was organised to highlight the transformative impact of the WVL project, funded by Global Affairs Canada and implemented by the Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF).

Rasheda, former adviser to a

caretaker government, pointed out the differences between urban and rural women and between lower and upper-middle-income working women, emphasising the need to eliminate these disparities.

"It has been said that women are now empowered. In reality, we see women's participation, but where is their stake? Empowerment and participation are not the same... True empowerment has not been ensured, and while discrimination may have slightly decreased, it persists," she said.

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## Need action plans to save rivers, canals

Says Rizwana

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Adviser of the interim government for water resources and environment ministries Syeda Rizwana Hasan yesterday stressed that an integrated action plan is urgently needed to recover the rivers and canals in Dhaka.

"If we don't address the condition of Dhaka's canals and rivers, we cannot save the city," she told a programme at Pani Bhaban.

Noting that the current generation never saw a clean canal in the capital, she highlighted the need to prioritise the decontamination of Dhaka's major canals.

Adilur Rahman Khan, adviser to housing and public works, and industry ministries, stressed for immediate drive against encroachers.

AF Hassan Arif, adviser to the LGRD and cooperatives ministry, also spoke.

## HC gets 23 new judges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-three newly appointed High Court judges were sworn in yesterday at the Supreme Court.

Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed administered the oath at a ceremony held in the Supreme Court Judges' Lounge.

The event was attended by judges from both the Appellate and High Court Divisions, and the ceremony was conducted by Supreme Court Registrar General Aziz Ahmed Bhuiyan.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin appointed the 23 additional judges under Article 98 of the constitution, raising the number of High Court judges to 101.

## 43RD BCS

# Frustration mounts over gazette delay

255 candidates under further scrutiny

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

The public administration ministry is yet to publish the gazette notification of the 43rd BCS, even nine months after the Public Service Commission (PSC) recommended the appointment of 2,805 candidates, causing frustration among the aspirants.

The candidates are concerned over the issuance of the official notification and getting their respective joining dates.

According to ministry sources, the verification process for recommended candidates of the 43rd Bangladesh Civil Service began while the Awami League government was in power.

The issuance of the notification was at the final stage before the fall of AL government. However, a re-verification process was initiated for 255 candidates following the ouster.

The public administration ministry published a report on September 8 regarding its work between August 8 and September 7 under the interim government.

"The information obtained from

intelligence reports regarding 255 candidates has been sent to the Special Branch for further verification in light of the changed circumstances. The notification will be issued as soon as the medical examination and intelligence reports are received," said the report.

**After being recommended for the 43rd BCS, I didn't pursue the next BCS exams, even though I passed the preliminary and written tests. But in a cruel twist of fate, I am still unemployed today.**

KHALID HASAN, a Buet alumnus

The report also said several candidates who were recommended for appointment in the 43rd BCS faced obstacles from miscreants while attending their medical examinations.

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As far as the eye can see, a traffic jam has left the Mirpur Road in the Science Lab area deadlocked. This jam left commuters struggling to reach their destinations on time. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN