

Repair possible for damaged building

Says PWD about secretariat fire

UNB, Dhaka

Building No 7 of the Secretariat, damaged by a devastating fire last week, can be repaired and made usable, according to Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Sub-Assistant Engineer of the Public Works Department.

"Our team responded promptly and assisted the Fire Service," Bhuiyan said yesterday. The four-storey building housed six ministries, with extensive damage across its 40-50 rooms per floor.

The building's future use depends on expert committee recommendations, he added. Meanwhile, the investigation committee will submit its preliminary report to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus on Tuesday, revising its earlier timeline, said CA's Deputy Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad.



These battery-run auto-rickshaws not only violate the ban on operating on Dhaka's main streets but also drive in the wrong direction, creating obstacles for oncoming vehicles. Moreover, some remain parked to pick up passengers, adding to the traffic chaos. This photo was taken on Satmasjid Road in Dhanmondi yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

ACC to probe BB reserve heist

DIPAN NANDY

The Anti-Corruption Commission of Bangladesh is set to initiate an inquiry into allegations of corruption linked to the 2016 cyber heist that stole \$101 million from Bangladesh Bank's account.

The investigation will also target key individuals within the bank's leadership, including then-Governor Dr Atiur Rahman.

Several senior ACC officials confirmed this development to The Daily Star, saying that the inquiry will begin in the coming days, following the preparation of an investigative file by the ACC's scrutiny cell.

A director general of the ACC told The Daily Star, "We have gathered specific information on corruption through media reports and the ACC's intelligence unit regarding the incident."

Apart from Dr Rahman, the ACC will also seek to investigate at least 10-12 former and current senior officials of Bangladesh Bank, including an executive director, a general manager, four joint directors, three deputy general managers, and two deputy directors.

In February 2016, international hackers orchestrated the heist, stealing \$101 million from Bangladesh Bank's account at the Federal Reserve Bank using fraudulent instructions. Their intended target was \$1 billion.

Of the \$81 million transferred to the Philippines, approximately \$18 million has been recovered so far. Investigations later suggested that Dridex malware may have facilitated the attack.

On 15 March 2016, 39 days after the incident, Bangladesh Bank Deputy Director Zubair Bin Huda filed a case with the Motijheel police station against unknown individuals under the Money Laundering Prevention Act.

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RECKLESS DRIVING OR SYSTEMATIC FAILURE?

What makes Dhaka-Mawa expressway so deadly

TANJIL HASAN

The nation watched in horror as footage emerged of the latest tragic accident on the Dhaka-Mawa Expressway. On Friday morning, six lives were lost in a devastating chain collision when a bus rammed into a private car parked at a toll plaza. The bus's momentum then carried it into a motorcycle and a microbus, leaving the private car mangled and resulting in the deaths of five people, including women and children, on the spot, with another succumbing later. Five others were injured.

This incident followed closely on the heels of two other deadly accidents on the same expressway. On Sunday morning, dense fog contributed to a 10-vehicle pile-up involving a bus, truck, private car, pickup van, and covered van in the Hasara area of Sholaghar, Srinagar upazila.

A driver, Md Farhad Hossain, 40, lost his life, while several others were injured.

The very next day, Panna Banik, 35, travelling with family in a private car, was killed in yet another collision when a covered van hit their vehicle.

The numbers paint a grim picture. According to the Srinagar Fire Service, 63 accidents occurred on the



The mangled remains of a car at the Dhaleshwari toll plaza on the Dhaka-Mawa Expressway in Keraniganj, Dhaka. The accident occurred on Friday morning when a Bepari Paribahan bus rammed into the stationary car, a microbus and a motorcycle from behind at the toll plaza, resulting in six fatalities.

PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka Mawa Expressway between December 2022 and December 2023.

These accidents resulted in 16 deaths and left 80 people injured. However, the actual casualty count could be higher, as some victims reportedly leave accident sites before emergency services arrive.

The 55-kilometre Dhaka-Mawa Bhangra Expressway was

designed as a symbol of modern infrastructure, constructed at a cost of £11,000 crore. It aimed to ensure safe and rapid transit, connecting Dhaka to Faridpur in record time.

Yet, despite the smooth surface and reduced travel time, accidents have surged.

Experts and officials are now scrutinising the factors behind this troubling trend.

Efforts to curb speeding, such as speed gun monitoring and case filings, face limitations.

"If everyone is speeding, how many cases can we file?" he asked rhetorically.

Manpower shortages exacerbate the problem. The highway police operate only two patrol teams on the expressway, which, according to Bosunia, are insufficient.

While public awareness campaigns, including microphone announcements at toll plazas and leaflet distribution, are ongoing, these measures alone cannot address the root causes, he added.

Dr Md Asif Raihan, associate professor at BUET's Accident Research Institute, said, "No accident occurs due to a single factor. It is a systemic failure involving road conditions, vehicle maintenance, and user behaviour."

For instance, fog-related accidents could be mitigated with improved lighting, clearer pavement markings, and adjustable speed limits tailored to specific sections of the expressway.

He also advocated for modernising toll collection systems.

"Replacing manual toll collection with automatic

AT A GLANCE

- 63 accidents in last one year
- 16 deaths in last one year
- At least 3 fatal clashes
- 8 fatalities in last week alone

Dr AKM Aktharuzzaman Bosunia, superintendent of Police for the Gazipur region of Highway Police, said, "Earlier, serious accidents were less frequent. Now, drivers speed recklessly on these well-paved roads, leading to more accidents."

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Women rights groups condemn gang rape, murder of UP member

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Samajik Protirodh Committee, a coalition of 66 organisations advocating for women's rights, human rights, and development, has expressed outrage over the gang rape and murder of a female Union Parishad (UP) member from Narail.

In a statement signed by Fauzia Moslem, president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, the platform condemned the attack as "medieval barbarism" and raised concerns over the increasing threat to the safety and dignity of women representatives in local government.

The statement, referencing media reports

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Country safer under the youth

Says Jamaat ameer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday expressed optimism about the country's future, claiming Bangladesh is now safer for the younger generation following the August 5 uprising that led to the removal of the Hasina-led Awami League government.

Speaking at a rally in Birganj, Dinajpur, he highlighted the youth's role in building a fairer society, calling them the torchbearers of the nation's future. Shafiqur also outlined his vision for a corruption-free Bangladesh, vowing to eliminate bribery and promote equality for all citizens.

At another meeting in Nilphamari, he rejected allegations that Jamaat-e-Islami had seized control of Islamic banks, accusing the Awami League government of corruption and mismanagement.

Maintain peace

Home ministry issues directive for two Tablighi groups

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Home Affairs Ministry yesterday instructed both factions of Tablighi Jamaat, led by Maulana Zubayer Ahmed and Maulana Muhammad Saad Kandhalvi, to continue operating in the mosques where they have traditionally been based.

"It is hereby informed that the followers of Maulana Zubayer Ahmed and Maulana Muhammad Saad Kandhalvi are instructed, in the interest of maintaining peace and order, to continue their respective activities in the mosques at the district and upazila levels where they have traditionally operated," the order, signed by Deputy Secretary Dr Mohammad Abdul Salam said.

Previously, on 26 December, the ministry restricted Maulana Saad's followers from overnight

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BFIU seeks bank account details of 12 journalists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit has requested information on the bank accounts of 12 journalists within three working days.

The BFIU has written to banks, asking for details of all the bank accounts held by the journalists.

The journalists include Subash Chandra Badal, former managing director of the Journalist Welfare Trust; Arifur Rahman Dolan of The Dhaka Post; Nurul Islam Hasib, special correspondent of Bangladesh Post; Dip Azad, chief news editor at Nagarik TV; Abul Kalam Azad, former chief editor of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha; Md Omor Faruque, deputy chief news editor of BSS; Zafar Wazed, former director general of the Press Institute of Bangladesh; Hossen Ara Mamata Islam Soma, special correspondent at Channel I; Obaidul Kabir Molla, deputy editor of The Daily Janakantha; Abed Khan, editor of The Daily Jagaran; Ajoy Dasgupta, former deputy editor of The Daily Samakal; and Syed Ishtiaque Reza, chief editor of Global TV.

Banks and financial institutions have been instructed to provide relevant information or documents, including account opening forms, KYC details, and transaction statements, within three working days of receiving the letter from the BFIU.



Burnt and abandoned vehicles remain inside the premises of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, damaged during the protests on August 4 amid the July uprising. Although several months have passed, the charred remains have yet to be removed, occupying space inside the hospital premises. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS