

Journalists  
regain access  
to Secretariat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 60 journalists were allowed to enter the Bangladesh Secretariat yesterday, after being barred for two days. Entry was granted at 2 PM, following a fire at Building 7 that severely disrupted access. Journalists had been unable to perform their duties on Thursday and Sunday due to the restrictions.

The government had announced on Sunday that temporary passes would be issued from Monday, but journalists had to wait until the afternoon to gain entry. Access was granted via the visitors' gate, with journalists listed by the Bangladesh Secretariat Reporters Forum (BSRF).

Vehicle entry remained restricted, with only specific government cars allowed inside.

A massive fire had devastated four floors of Building 7 on December 25, affecting several ministries.

The probe report on this incident is expected to be submitted to the chief adviser's office on Tuesday. Earlier, Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan on Thursday said the high-profile probe committee formed by the government to investigate the Secretariat fire incident would submit its primary report within the next three days.

BARISHAL DOE OFFICE

# Water testing equipment out of order for 4 months

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

All the water testing equipment at the lone laboratory of the Department of Environment in Barishal division have been lying out of order for past four months.

As such, testing facilities for water samples from different areas across the division are currently suspended.

Health experts and environmental activists have raised concerns over public health in the region, especially regarding spread of water-borne diseases like typhoid, cholera, dysentery, diarrhoea, among others.

They demanded prompt steps to make the repair or replace the equipment to turn the laboratory operational.

According to DoE sources, the lab was set up in 2010 to conduct tests for determining dissolved oxygen levels, dissolved salts, and presence of bacteria, among others, using samples from different sources. This enabled DoE to identify water sources with possible contamination or other health risks.

While relocating the DoE divisional office in Nathullabad area of Barishal city in 2022, different water testing equipment of the lab were partially damaged. The testing facilities at the lab continued on a small scale till last August. Since then, all tests have been suspended for past four months, the sources added.

As such, DoE authorities have been unable to test the water samples of hotels, motels and restaurants, as well as water sources including rivers, canals and other waterbodies across the division.

"While about one crore people in six



districts of Barishal division are at risk of drinking contaminated water, it is a matter of concern that the lone water testing laboratory is lying non-operational. We have repeatedly spoken to the DoE in this regard. However, they are yet to take any visible measures," said Lincoln Bayen, Barishal divisional coordinator of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association.

Physician Dr Mizanur Rahman said water testing should be done regularly; otherwise public health will be at risk.

Contacted, Golam Kibria, senior chemist at the DoE Barishal divisional office, said steps are on the resolve the issue soon.

Muhammad Mujahidul Islam, director of DoE, Barishal division, said the issue of setting up of a lab was not under the scope of the project when the new building for the DoE office was built.

"The contractor or the Public Works Department handed over the building without setting up the lab. As a result, the lab equipment have not been installed yet. The problem has been reported to higher authorities to resolve it," he also said. "Since the lab is not operational at present, water samples from industrial areas have been sent to Dhaka for testing four times in the last four months," he added.

## Deputy secretary found unconscious on Dhaka-Ctg bus

### Dope gang link suspected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A deputy secretary was rescued in an unconscious state from a bus early yesterday and was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Police suspect that Dilip Kumar Debnath of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs fell victim to a dope gang that uses sedatives to rob victims when he was travelling from Chattogram to Dhaka.

Sub-inspector Shukhorhi Modhu of Teigaon Police Station said a bus from Hamza Express stopped at a checkpoint around 1:30 am, and a bus staffer reported that a passenger was found unconscious on his seat.

Police immediately took him to DMCH, he said. Quoting the bus staffer, the SI said the victim was supposed to disembark at Sayedabad. When the bus reached Sayedabad, the supervisor called Dilip, but he did not respond.

Then, the bus was heading towards Mohakhali, and at the checkpoint they informed police, the SI said.

The victim's belongings included only a button phone and a visiting card. Using the card, police identified him as a deputy secretary and informed his wife about the incident.

The victim's wife arrived at the hospital and said the victim had been returning to Dhaka from a trip to the hill tracts, the SI said, quoting her.

His phone was missing, along with other unspecified items. "We suspect he fell prey to a dope gang," said the SI.

Parvez Ahmed, supervisor of the bus, said the victim and the alleged dope gang member boarded the bus together from Chattogram and sat side by side.

Both had informed the staffer they would get off at Sayedabad.

However, the other man got off in Chittagong Road area, the supervisor said.

# Demand surges for clay plates, pots in winter



PARTHA CHAKRABORTTY, Bagerhat

In Kathipara village under Morrelganj upazila of Bagerhat, the chill of winter brings a flurry of activity as artisans craft traditional clay plates and pots. These handmade items are in high demand, particularly for making pithas.

Clay plates used for steamed pithas like chitai and bhapa are especially popular during the season. Wholesale prices for 100 chitai plates start at Tk 1,500, while 100 bhapa plates fetch Tk 3,000. Sales peak during Agrahayan and Poush months, when these items become indispensable for celebrating winter's culinary delights.

Clay pots for collecting date and palm juice are also sought after, with 100 pots selling for Tk 3,500. Despite the growing use of plastic bottles for juice storage, traditional clay pots remain a staple in regions such as Bagerhat, Taleshar, and Morrelganj.



Gobinda Paul, a 61-year-old artisan, said their clay products travel across the region, from Morrelganj to Patharghata. His wife, Arati Pal, detailed the labourious process of meeting the seasonal demand, working from dawn until late evening.

"We begin work as early as 6:00am in the morning and continue till around 9:00pm at night to keep up with the orders," she said.

The challenges faced by these artisans are immense. Labourers like Arati Kundu, 43, and Gouri Pal, 62, earn Tk 75 for every 100 plates or pots they craft, often working two weeks to produce 1,000 items.

Despite the hard work, they struggle to make ends meet. While the artisans take pride in their work, knowing their products are integral to local traditions and festivals, they are also calling for better wages and support to sustain their craft.

## Prothom Alo staffer abducted, released after ransom

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A Prothom Alo staff member in Mymensingh was abducted and subjected to ransom demands by a group of miscreants on Thursday night.

The victim, Abul Bashar, is the regional circulation manager of Prothom Alo in Mymensingh.

Bashar filed a case with the Kotwali Model Police Station on Saturday evening, said Md Shafiqul Islam Khan, officer-in-charge of the police station, yesterday.

According to the case statement, around 7:45pm on Thursday, Bashar was returning to his Gazipur home. After reaching the Digharkanda Bypass on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway, three unidentified men approached him.


The men, aged between 30 and 35,

initiated a conversation to confirm his employment at Prothom Alo. They then lured him to a nearby private car under the pretence of discussing newspaper sales with someone inside the vehicle.

As Bashar approached the car, the assailants forcibly pushed him inside. The car had a driver and one passenger in the backseat. Two of the three men entered the car, while one stayed behind.

In the statement, Bashar said that the perpetrators blindfolded and bound him with a muffler, attempting to strangle him. They beat him severely with a metal object, inflicting injuries on his hands, legs, knees, head, and other parts of his body.

The kidnappers allegedly searched his pockets and bag, seizing his wallet, which contained 15,700 Tk, an ATM card, driving licence, motorcycle documents, SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



### Bangladesh Bank

Common Services Department-2  
(Mechanical Engineering Wing)  
Head Office, Dhaka-1000

#### Invitation for Tender (Goods & Related Works) Through Web

01.	Procuring entity	Common Services Department-2, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka-1000.
02.	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM).
03.	Invitation Ref. No. & date	SCD-2(MES): 11/2/2024-79 Date: 29/12/2024
04.	Source of funds	Bangladesh Bank's own fund.
05.	Name of the work	Supply, installation, testing & commissioning of 40 (forty) Nos. 1.5Ton (17000-18000 BTU/hr) Capacity Split Type Wall Mounted Air Conditioning Machine at Officers' Dormitory of Bangladesh Bank, Rajshahi office.
06.	Address of the web for submission e-Tender	From web: <a href="http://www.bangladeshbank.org.bd">www.bangladeshbank.org.bd</a> <a href="http://www.bangladeshbank-bank.org">www.bangladeshbank-bank.org</a> (e-Tender)
07.	Last date & time e-Tenders through web	15/01/2025 on or before 3:00pm.
08.	Last date & time and name & address of the office for receiving original tender security and other documents	15/01/2025 on or before 3:15pm. Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2 (7th Floor of 30th storied Building), Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka-1000.
09.	Tender opening date & time	15/01/2025 at 3:30pm.
10.	Name and address of the office opening tender	Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2 (7th Floor of 30th storied Building), Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka-1000. (Intending tenderers or their authorized representatives are allowed to attend the tender opening).
11.	Eligibility of the tenderer	a) The minimum of years of general experience of the tenderer in the supply of Goods and related services as Supplier shall be 10 years. b) Tenderer shall have minimum specific experience as Supplier in supply of Proposed brand Air conditioner machine in any govt/semi-govt/autonomous organisation in single contracts having total value not less than Tk 30.00 lakh successfully completed within the last 05 years. c) Tenderer shall have agency /distributorship of the proposed brand Air conditioner machine. Scanned copy of original distributor/agencyship certificate shall be enclosed with the offer. d) The tenderer shall have to furnish the certificate in this respect from an officer not below the rank of Executive Engineer or equivalent and shall meet all other criteria, terms and conditions as specified in the tender documents without which the tender will not be considered. e) The minimum amount of liquid asset i.e. working capital or credit line(s) of the tenderer shall be Tk 35.00 lakh only. In case of credit facilities Bank shall ensure that the abovementioned credit limits will be given if the said work is awarded to the contractor.
12.	Tender security	Tender security amounting BDT 1,02,000.00 (Taka one lakh two thousand only) will be required in the form of Pay Order/Bank Draft/Bank Guarantee in favour of the Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka-1000.
13.	Works completion time	45 days from the date of the Award of Contract.
14.	Address of official inviting tender	Sudhangshu Kumar Sarker, Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2 (7th Floor of 30th storied Building), Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka-1000.
15.	Contact details of official inviting tender	Phone: 88-02-9530490, Fax: 88-02-9530321.
16.	Special instructions	(i) The tenderer shall submit the tender through Bangladesh Bank website (e-Tendering) and shall have a valid email address for participating in e-Tendering. (ii) Original PO/BD/BG as tender security has to be sent to Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2 within stipulated date and time of TDS. (iii) Scanned copy of the tender security shall be submitted with the tender through web. (iv) Tenderer shall submit all documentary evidence (attached or original), failing which the tender may be considered as non-responsive. (v) Tenderer shall duly fill in the Form PG3-1 (Tender Submission Letter) and Form PG3-2 (Tenderer Information Sheet) as per format given in tender document. (vi) PG3-1 Form shall be completed and signed by the authorised signatory on the letterhead pad and scanned copy of it shall be attached during submitting tender and original will have to send to Director (Engineering-E/M), CSD-2 at scheduled time as per TDS. (vii) Furnishing of any false, misleading documents shall result in rejection of the tender and may lead to action under rules 127 of PPR-2008. (viii) All sorts of security and safety measures shall be carried out by the contractor during execution of the work. (ix) Bangladesh Bank reserves all right to accept or reject any or all the tender without assigning any reason whatsoever. No claim will be entertained in this regard.

সূত্র নং-ভিসিপিঃ ৪৮/২০২৪-৩৩৫৩

ব্যার্থকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা  
কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

জিডি-১৩০৪

**Sudhangshu Kumar Sarker**  
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Common Services Department-2  
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