

Marium Begum passes away

CITY DESK

Former lawmaker Marium Begum passed away at the age of 101 yesterday.

Born in 1923 to an illustrious Muslim family from Faridpur, she founded Rupayan, becoming one of Bangladesh's first female entrepreneurs.

After 1971, Marium Begum helped establish the Bangladesh Mohila Punrabashon Sangstha, providing support for Biranganas (war heroines) and their children.

She is survived by two daughters and a son.

Her namaz-e-janaza will be held after Juma prayers today at Masjid Al Maghfirah, Uttara, Dhaka.

Tajul Islam Chonchol no more

CITY DESK

AKM Tajul Islam Chonchol, former general manager of Adamjee Jute Mills, and father of Ashraf Bin Taj, co-founder & managing director, IDC Bangladesh PLC, passed away on Tuesday.

Tajul was a stalwart of the jute industry, dedicating his life to advancing the sector and contributing significantly to its modernisation, said a press release.

He was suffering from ailments related to old age and was admitted to a city hospital where he received treatment until his passing.

He was buried at the Banani Graveyard.

He is survived by his family, colleagues, and a wide circle of well-wishers.

Khulna chokes on dust

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Khulna city is grappling with an escalating dust pollution crisis, exacerbated by ongoing development projects, poor environmental management, and unregulated industrial expansion.

Despite the World Health Organization's initiative to transform Khulna into a healthy city by 2027, the air quality remains alarmingly poor, significantly impacting the health and livelihoods of residents.

Large-scale development projects, including the Khulna WASA sewage system and KCC drainage system, have left roads unattended for months, contributing to severe dust accumulation.

Projects such as KCC's Tk 823 crore drainage initiative and Tk 607 crore road development effort, along with Tk 500 crore of additional work by K-WASA and other agencies, have intensified the problem, particularly during the dry season.

These unfinished and poorly managed projects have led to hazardous conditions across the city.

Unregulated industrial activities, the burning of fossil fuels, and a growing number of motor vehicles without proper emission controls further aggravate the air quality.



The lack of green spaces and the careless dumping of construction materials on roads exacerbate the already dire situation, leaving residents to contend with persistent dust pollution.

Prolonged exposure to dust has led to widespread health issues, including respiratory illnesses.

Ajoy Sarker, a salon owner in Khulna, has developed asthma and chest diseases despite no family history of such conditions.

"I have also faced significant business losses as customers avoid the area due to the unbearable conditions," he said.

Similarly, thousands of residents across multiple wards, including Khalishpur, Navy Check Post, Jora Gate, and others, report enduring severe dust pollution for over six years.

The problem extends beyond KCC areas, with locations like Joybangla Mor and Zero Point experiencing frequent clouds of dust stirred up by passing buses and trucks.

severe risks, particularly during the dry season.

Sadhan Chandra Swarnokar, a lecturer at Khulna University, said air pollution is not just an environmental issue; it is a public health emergency waiting for urgent action.

"To combat this crisis, coordinated efforts are needed, including stricter enforcement of environmental laws, cleaner technologies promotion, public transportation enhancement, and community awareness campaigns," he added.



Roads such as Sonadanga Bypass Road, which serves over 400 buses daily, remain in deplorable condition, with heavy dust spreading across the area. The Rupsha Shipyard Road, incomplete for 13 years, is another major contributor to the crisis. Other critical roads, including those in Sonadanga, BIDC, and the bypass routes, are similarly neglected, further worsening the situation.

Experts highlight that Khulna's air quality frequently surpasses unhealthy levels, with PM2.5 and PM10 concentrations often exceeding 350 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and, at times, spiking to 450 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Sulfur dioxide levels also remain above safe limits, adding to the public health emergency. Residents struggle to mitigate the effects of suspended particulate matter, which poses

Advocate Babul Hawladar, member secretary of Khulna Nagarik Samaj, criticised contractors and agencies for failing to complete projects on time. "They dump construction materials on roads, causing further pollution. K-WASA and KDA must finish their work on schedule," he said.

While KCC has repaired nearly 600 roads and 345 drains over the past two years, the city's air quality has deteriorated significantly.

Md Abdul Aziz, superintendent engineer of KCC, said KCC uses two modern road-sweeping trucks equipped with water tanks.

"We need more sweeping machine to clean dust regularly," he added. "Besides, house owners carelessly pile sand and other construction materials on road which worsens the situation," he added.

7 hurt as green

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joining the movement after weeks of silence.

"We questioned their motives as they hadn't communicated with us during this time. When we raised these concerns, they assaulted us," he claimed.

The injured include Syed Mohammad Zakir, Amirul Rajib, Naimul Hasan, Faysal Mahmud, Ahadul Islam, and Dr Mansur, according to Amirul.

GREEN VOICE DENIES ALLEGATIONS

Humayun Kabir Rajib, co-coordinator of Green Voice, denied initiating the violence. "We began our protest at Anowar Park and continued to Panthakunjia. Some activists questioned why we joined after 21 days and accused us of hiring people. This provocation angered our members," he said.

Rajib said environmental movements cannot be confined to a timeline and claimed that the allegations of physical assault were exaggerated.

Iqbal Habib, vice-president of BAPA, also rejected allegations against his group.

"BAPA has consistently fought to protect parks and playgrounds, even when others didn't. We aim to unite activists, not divide them," he said.

Habib said BAPA often joins local protests to amplify their impact. "Some activists resisted our participation, but students involved with Green Voice defended their peers when tensions escalated," he added.

Adil Mohammad Khan, president of the Bangladesh Institute of Planners, condemned the incident, calling it a "black chapter" for the environmental movement. "The attack on activists is not only unfortunate but a criminal offence," he said.

Replying to question, he said vehicles registration remained suspended for over a month after miscreants set on fire BRTA headquarters amid student protest in July.

"But that may not be a reason because a car owner can register vehicle afterwards," he said.

Migration saw 22pc

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The report noted that migration slowed during the July uprising and economic instability, but activity has rebounded in recent months.

To address these issues, Prof Tasneem urged the interim government to prioritise governance reforms in the migration sector.

She also stressed the need for policy reforms, enhanced skills development programmes for workers, and the creation of safe job opportunities for women.

Additionally, she emphasised improving the overall migration system by ensuring transparency in recruitment processes and strengthening training centres.

Vehicle registration

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Besides, bike dealers used to provide loans to consumers before the pandemic, but poor recovery rate reduced their investment, further affecting the situation, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The number of minibuses registered also fell by 22.34 percent, from 287 in 2023 to 220 in 2024.

Buses and minibuses are key elements of public transport, and their shortage has led to an increase in small vehicles like private cars and motorcycles.

According to BRTA data, 8,657 SUVs (BRTA registers such vehicles under "Jeep" category) were registered in 2024, up from 7,765 in 2023, an 11.45 percent increase.

Abdul Haque said SUV assemblers receive tax exemptions when importing parts, allowing them to sell the vehicles at a lower price, which may explain the rise in registrations.

PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 3

Fazr Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5-30	12-30	4-00	5-30
JAMAAT 6-05	1-15	4-15	5-35

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Country shows

Four years on

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Kamal Uddin, general secretary of the Train Passengers Welfare Council, said, "We have repeatedly requested the railway to reinstate this service, but no action has been taken."

BR officials attribute the delay to a shortage of coaches and locomotives.

ABM Kamruzzaman, divisional railway manager for the Chattogram division, said, "The crisis has forced us to suspend several short-distance services. We are instead focusing on increasing trips on the Chatogram-Cox's Bazar special train to reduce commuter hardships."

Prof Kabeer noted that Bangladesh, once characterised as "classic patriarchy" with practices like patrilineal inheritance and purdah, has made significant social progress. She attributed this shift to the growing agency of women, stressing

that women's ability to aspire has been key to the transformation. She also attributed the change to increased opportunities for women in education, employment, and social programmes.

BIDS Director General Binayak Sen said while patriarchy persists, Bangladeshi women have created their own space within it. However, challenges remain, which need to be addressed for further progress.

Naripokkho founding member Shireen Hug, Nijera Kori coordinator Khushi Kabir, and UNDP Gender team leader Sharmin Islam also attended the lecture, among others.

Cold, dense fog

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Observatory Centre recording 11.3 degrees Celsius yesterday morning.

According to doctors at Rangpur Medical College Hospital, there has been an increase in patients with cold-related illnesses, including pneumonia, respiratory infections, and diarrhoea.

Hospitals across northern districts, including Thakurgaon and Panchagarh, are witnessing a similar surge in cases.

"Around 200 children suffering from cold related ailments are currently under treatment in the hospital's 45 bed children's ward," said Rakibul Alam, resident medical officer of Thakurgaon 250 bed Modern Hospital.

He said elderly patients with similar health issues are also being admitted.

Dinajpur and Rangpur district administrations have started distributing warm clothes to affected populations, but the demand far exceeds the supply.

Low-income families, unable to afford winter

clothing, continue to suffer in silence.

According to Md Mostafizur Rahman, assistant meteorologist at the Rangpur Meteorological Office, the weather in the northern areas is expected to remain unchanged for the next few days, with the sun obscured by dense fog.

Our correspondents from Benapole, Dinajpur, Lalmonirhat, and Thakurgaon contributed to this report.

UPDF member

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During a search, the army recovered an M-16 assault rifle, two rounds of MG sniper ammunition, 90 rounds of rifle ammunition, a walkie-talkie, 12 mobile phones, and other equipment, it added.

UPDF (Main) spokesperson Angya Marma told The Daily Star that the person killed is not a member of their organisation and the name of their organisation is being falsely linked to incite internal conflict.

Debata o Ami Bokto

জরুরী ভিত্তিতে বেকারা শিশু মনের ৬ তলায় দেৱাকান এবং মাতৃবিল বাসিন্দার এলাকায় ৭.৫ কাঠামো ৮ তলা বাচ্চার জমি বিক্ৰয় হৈব।

অঞ্চলীয় মোগামে কৰন

০১৭১১ ৫৮৩১৭৫

Plot Sale

Bashundhara R/A, Block-L, 3 katha Corner, Road Size: 40/25 Feet.

Contact: 01706617524

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Superintending Engineer, RHD

Sylhet Road Circle, Sylhet.

Phone: 0299-6631506

E-mail: sesyl@rhd.gov.bd

Dated: 01/01/2025

Tender Corrigendum - 04

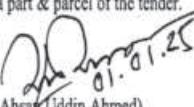
Tender Package No : 01/PSN/SRC/2024-2025(Re-Tender)

Tender Package Name : Upgradation, Operation and Maintenance of a Real-time Web based Toll collection system of "Fenchugon Bridge" Toll Plaza at 36th Km of Moulvibazar-Rajnagar-Fenchugon-Sylhet Road(N-208) Under Sylhet Road Division during the year 2024-2025 for 03 (Three) years."

This is to notified for all concern that the following amendments has been made to the Invitation of Tender Ref. No. 35.01.9100.010.07.5/608(ka) 24-3636; Dated: 11.11.2024 for procurement of Non-Consulting Services.

IFT Notice SL No	Name of Criteria	Published in newspaper/Tender	Amendments
17	Tender Last Selling Date	05-01-2025 and 05.00 pm	26-01-2025 and 05.00 pm
18	Tender Submission Date and Time	06-01-2025 and 12.00 pm	27-01-2025 and 12.00 pm
19	Tender Opening Date and Time	06-01-2025 and 01.00 pm	27-01-2025 and 01.00 pm

All other terms & conditions will remain unchanged. This corrigendum notice will be treated as a part & parcel of the tender.


Md. Mostafizur Rahman
ID No: 601944
Superintendent Engineer (C.C.), RHD
Sylhet Road Circle, Sylhet.

Engineering Division