



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Participants at a discussion titled 'Women in Energy: Inspiring Change' during the Women and Energy Carnival 2025, organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation under its Women's Empowerment and Energy Project, at the Liberation War Museum in Agargaon, Dhaka yesterday.

## 8 additional DIGs, 6 SPs transferred

BSS, Dhaka

The government has transferred eight additional deputy inspectors general and six superintendents of police including two joint commissioners of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), the home ministry said yesterday.

The ministry issued a circular on the transfers and under the order DMP joint commissioners Sultana Nazma Hossain and Md Saleh Uddin were posted as tourist police chief and to Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) with the rank of additional DIG.

Additional commissioner of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) Md Humaiun Kabir has been posted to Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) as additional DIG. Additional DIG of Chattogram police range Mohammad Riazul Haque has been posted at police telecom unit with the same rank.

PBI's supernumerary additional DIG Mohammad Anwarul Haque has been posted at police's Sylhet range and Barishal Metropolitan Police's (BMP) additional commissioner Khandkar Md Shamim Hossain was attached to police's Rajshahi range as additional DIG.

Supernumerary additional DIG Md Humaiun Kabir of PBI's

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

# Ichamati dredging stalled by legal hassles

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

Dredging work of the Ichamati river in Pabna town has been badly hampered due to a prolonged legal battle with encroachers, raising concerns over the completion of the Tk 1,554 crore project.

The Water Development Board began the "Rejuvenating River Ichamati" project in June 2024. The three-year scheme includes 110 kilometres of dredging — 33.772km of the Ichamati river, 44.072km of connecting canals, 20km of the Sutikhali river, and 12.37km of the Varara canal — to bring water flow back into the Ichamati.

In addition to dredging, the mega project will construct a 10km retaining wall, 10km of drainage, 23 new bridges, 56 ghats for boats, a 10km walkway, and will plant 42,310 trees along the riverbanks for beautification.

According to WDB officials, dredging of the 33km main river was to be carried out first, followed by the other development works. So far, 65 percent of the work has been completed within a year, but dredging in the 5km municipality stretch has been halted due to legal disputes, said Md Mahabub Alam, executive engineer of WDB, Pabna.

A total of 109 cases have been filed in different courts, most of which have led to stay orders preventing progress in the disputed areas, he said.

"Although dredging has begun in the municipality area



by avoiding the disputed spots, the work is mostly hampered due to insufficient space for moving excavators," Mahabub said.

During visits to different areas, dredger machines were found stranded on the riverbank.

WDB sources said there were already 73 cases pending in different courts when the dredging began last year. In the past few months, encroachers filed dozens more.

"WDB lawyers are fighting the cases, but we cannot work in the disputed land before court orders are given," Mahabub said.

He also noted that land acquisition for connecting the Ichamati with the Padma river has yet to be completed. "We need to acquire 160 hectares for the connection. The land has been marked, but the acquisition process is still pending," he added.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

## ENERGY SECTOR

# Women remain largely under-represented

Experts tell Women and Energy Carnival 2025, call for inclusive, gender-responsive energy transition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women make up only 10 percent of Bangladesh's energy workforce, far below the global average of 32 percent.

In public utilities within the power sector, just 6 percent of staff are women, while only 16 percent of officers in the Power Division are female.

The gap is even wider in engineering roles — only 6 percent (304 of 5,006) are women, mostly in junior posts. Just 45 serve as executive or senior engineers, mainly within the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB).

Against this backdrop, speakers at an event yesterday stressed the need to recognise women as key stakeholders in Bangladesh's renewable energy transition.

They urged the government and policymakers to ensure women's equal participation in decision-making, policy processes, and leadership positions in the energy sector.

The discussion took place at the Women and Energy Carnival 2025, organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) under

### AT A GLANCE

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6% of staff in power utilities, 16% of Power Division officers are women

In engineering roles, only 6% (304 of 5,006) are women (mostly junior positions)

Only 45 women serve as executive or senior engineers (mainly in BPDB)

its Women's Empowerment and Energy (WEE) Project, at the Liberation War Museum in Agargaon, Dhaka.

Delivering the keynote address, Banasree Mitra Neogi, director of Rights and Governance Programmes at MJF, said, "It is crucial to see whether everyone's participation in inclusive energy is being ensured. Equitable fairness is required."

She noted that many areas of the country, such as hilly regions, still

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

## HEALTH GRAFT Contractor Mithu held in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Motazzerul Islam Mithu, accused of large-scale corruption in the health sector including in the procurement of masks and personal protective equipment (PPE) during the Covid-19 pandemic, was arrested from Gulshan on Wednesday night.

Detectives arrested Mithu at the request of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), said Rabiul Islam Bhuiyan, joint commissioner (North DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

"We have already handed him over to the ACC," he told The Daily Star.

Mithu, owner of Lexicon Merchandize and Technocrat, came under scrutiny during the pandemic over allegations of supplying substandard masks, PPE, and other medical equipment.

In October 2019, the ACC had sought a travel ban against Mithu, describing him as a controversial contractor who allegedly embezzled and laundered large sums of money through syndicates operating in the health sector.

ACC officials said Mithu amassed properties worth several crores of taka, including agricultural land, leased plots, and flats, through alleged graft.

## ASSESSING HUMAN RIGHTS EU parliament team to visit September 16-18

STAR REPORT

A delegation of European Parliament members will be visiting Bangladesh from September 16 to 18 to assess the reforms and human rights.

The five-member delegation include Mounir Satouri (Greens/EFA, FR), Human Rights Subcommittee Chair; Isabel Wiseler-Lima (EPP, Luxembourg); Arkadiusz Mularczyk (ECR, PL); Urmaz Paet (Renew Europe, Estonia) and Catarina Vieira (The Greens/EFA, The Netherlands), according to a statement of the EU mission in Dhaka.

The delegation members will meet with the representatives of the interim government

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

## Pakistan PM calls for stronger bilateral ties Meets Bangladesh religious affairs adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has stressed the need to deepen ties with Bangladesh, saying relations between the two countries should continue to strengthen.

He made the remarks when Bangladesh's Adviser on Religious Affairs AFM Khalid Hossain, who is visiting Pakistan, called on him at his office in Islamabad yesterday, according to a statement of the Pakistan Prime Minister's Office.

Khalid was accompanied by Bangladesh High Commissioner to Pakistan Iqbal Hussain Khan.

Welcoming the delegation, Sharif expressed

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

## Govt waives 7.5% VAT on large ocean-going vessel imports

UNB, Dhaka

The government has decided to waive the 7.5 percent VAT on imports of ocean-going vessels over 5,000 deadweight tonnage (DWT) in a bid to boost foreign exchange earnings and create more job opportunities.

The Advisory Council took the decision at its weekly meeting held at the Chief Adviser's Office with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus in the chair.

The council believes that exemption will encourage vessel procurement in both the public and private sectors, expand opportunities for foreign exchange earnings and generate new jobs, said Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam while briefing reporters at the Foreign Service Academy.

"This is not just a measure for business convenience, but also a significant step toward strengthening Bangladesh's capacity in international trade," Alam said.

The meeting also discussed Bangladesh's firm stance on the Palestine issue.

"We have always maintained a clear position on the Palestinian cause," Alam said, adding that Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain will present Bangladesh's position at the upcoming UN High-Level International Conference on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine in New York.

The adviser will also attend the OIC Emergency Meeting in Doha on September 15, said Alam.

Progress made by the Reform Commissions was one of the issues that came up for discussion.

Alam said 51 recommendations have already been implemented, while 37 are partially implemented and the remaining ones are under progress.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Local children revel in yesterday's sudden rain, joyfully playing on a footpath in Agargaon, Dhaka, as a welcome relief from the heat.

## Armed forces' magistracy powers again extended

BSS, Dhaka

The government has extended the executive magistracy powers of commissioned officers of the Bangladesh Army for an additional 60 days from today.

The commissioned officers holding the rank of captain and above have been granted special executive magistrate powers across the country for 60 days starting from September 12, according to a Public Administration ministry notification issued yesterday.

Earlier, on July 14 this year, the magistracy powers of these officers were extended for two months, a term that ends today.

According to the new order, the extension will be effective from September 12 for the next 60 days. Officers of equivalent ranks serving in the Border Guard Bangladesh and Bangladesh Coast Guard have also been brought under this directive.