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## ICT to probe AL for crimes against humanity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) is set to begin a primary investigation into allegations of crimes against humanity against the Awami League as a political party, Chief Prosecutor Mohammad Tajul Islam said yesterday.

This is the first time in history that the ICT prosecution has decided to probe a political party for allegations of crimes against humanity.

On May 10, President Mohammed Shahabuddin promulgated an ordinance amending the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, to empower the tribunals to try a political party facing charges of genocide and crimes against humanity and punish it if found guilty.

The move followed complaints and investigation reports bringing allegations against state forces

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2



Idle fishing trawlers line the shore near the Fishery Ghat in the port city yesterday, as the hilsa fishing ban began at midnight Friday. The 22-day ban, lasting till October 25, is enforced every year to protect brooding hilsa.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## DENGUE OUTBREAK 9 dead, over 1,000 cases in one day

Doctors concerned over patients seeking treatment late

HELEMUL ALAM

At least 1,042 new dengue cases were reported yesterday -- the highest in a single day this year -- taking the confirmed number to nearly 50,000 so far.

Nine people died from the Aedes mosquito-borne disease yesterday, the second highest single-day toll this year. With them, the total death count is now 212, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS). Bangladesh saw its deadliest day of the year on September 21, when dengue claimed 12 lives, the highest single-day death toll recorded so far.

As of yesterday, 49,907 people have been hospitalised with dengue this year. Last month alone, 15,866 were infected and 76 died. In just the first five days of this month, 2,565 new cases and 14 deaths have already been reported.

Experts have warned that cases and fatalities will rise sharply if urgent measures are not taken.

HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, told The Daily Star that patient numbers have risen steeply in the past week.

"We started operating a separate ward in the hospital about eight days ago. Just a day earlier, we had 29 patients there, but the number nearly doubled to 60 today. Most are admitted in critical condition."

He mentioned that most patients arrive with low blood

» Total cases this year: **49,907**

» Total deaths this year: **212**

» **76** people died of dengue last month



## Gaibandha woman dies with anthrax-like symptoms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A woman from Gaibandha's Sundarganj upazila died with anthrax-like symptoms at Rangpur Medical College Hospital last night.

The deceased was Rozina Begum, 45, wife of Abul Hossain of Paschim Belka village. Her nephew Ashraful Islam said she died shortly after 9:30pm.

Dr Mokhlesur Rahman, head of the medicine department at the hospital, told The Daily Star, "Rozina did not die while undergoing treatment. Her condition was already critical when she was brought to our hospital last night."

"Based on the symptoms, we suspected her to be an anthrax patient. But her relatives wanted to take her away from the hospital, and she died within the hospital premises."

Dibakar Basak, Sundarganj Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer, said Rozina had two sores on her hand and had been exposed to a sick animal.

"It cannot be confirmed whether she died of anthrax without tests," he added.

Rozina's nephew Ashraful said she had slaughtered and distributed the meat of a sick goat five days before falling ill.

"A few days later, two sores appeared on her hand. Yesterday, her condition deteriorated and her blood pressure dropped significantly. When she was taken to Sundarganj Upazila Health Complex around 3:00pm, doctors referred her to the Rangpur hospital."

Anthrax cases have been detected in Gaibandha after eight people from Pirgachha upazila of Rangpur tested positive at the laboratory of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) late last month.

Two people had died in the upazila last month with symptoms resembling anthrax. However, it could not be confirmed whether they had died of anthrax, as no samples were taken from them.

## 6YR-OLD'S BODY IN SEPTIC TANK She was sexually assaulted before being murdered Shows post-mortem report

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Shariatpur

The post-mortem report of six-year-old Taiba, whose body was found in a septic tank in Shariatpur's Bhedarganj upazila on September 26, confirms she was sexually assaulted before being strangled to death.

The report states that she was strangled, with a horizontal injury mark on the front of her neck. It adds that her reproductive parts were lacerated before her death, while there were bruises on both her inner thighs and upper arms. The report further states the child she had bit her own tongue.

Signed by Resident Medical Officer Dr Mitu Akhter, Medical Officer Dr Lina Sadina, and Dr Amit Sengupta of Shariatpur Sadar Hospital on October 4, the report notes that the sexual assault was homicidal in nature.

Confirming the findings yesterday, hospital Superintendent Dr Habibur Rahman told The Daily Star, "What is written in the report is exactly what happened to the girl. She was sexually assaulted."

Family members said the child went missing around 5:00pm on September 24. Her body was recovered two days later from a neighbour's septic tank.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

## DHAKA-SYLHET HIGHWAY Road of endless misery

Tk 16,919cr megaproject shows only 15% progress in 5yrs

DWOHA CHOWDHURY

Five years since its launch, the Dhaka Sylhet Corridor Project has achieved a mere 15 percent of its objectives, leaving the 210-kilometre

project remains stalled.

Since fiscal 2021-22, 56 of the 66 lawsuits related to land acquisition remain unresolved, preventing contractors from accessing key areas, according to the Roads and

Highways Department. Said Nizam Uddin, a Sunamganj resident who commutes to Dhaka every month for work.

Even a few years ago, his trips would take six to seven hours. Now, the journey takes 12 to 13 hours.

- » Envisioned as a vital link with Asian Highway, BIMSTEC, SAARC countries
- » Meant to facilitate fast, smooth travel between Dhaka and Sylhet
- » Project bankrolled with a Tk 13,245cr loan from ADB, Tk 3,674cr from govt
- » Only 20pc of funds utilised since launched in January 2021



stretch in disrepair and turning millions' journeys into ordeals.

Land disputes and delays in utility relocation have held up the Tk 16,919 crore project, according to its project director AK Mohammad Fazlul Karim. Meeting the December 2026 deadline is impossible now, he said.

While some soil development, bridge and culvert work has begun where land is available, most of the

Highways Department.

The corridor project includes 66 bridges, 305 culverts and overpasses, six railway over-bridges, 37 U-turns, and 26 footbridges. It was divided into 13 packages, each assigned to a contractor.

But without land, the plan remains mostly on paper.

As a result, road travel on the route has become an ordeal.

"The suffering is indescribable,"

Recent visits revealed the road riddled with deep potholes and large craters, making travel both slow and dangerous. Long gridlocks across various sections add to the physical and mental strain, turning each trip into a test of endurance.

"The condition is horrible," said Mohammad Shahid, a driver with Al-Mobaraka Paribahan for 18 years.

Besides potholes, many stretches

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2



A large portion of a road in Chachoi village of Narail's Lohagara upazila has collapsed under pressure from the strong currents of the Madhumati River. Locals claimed continuous river erosion is also washing away cropland in the absence of a permanent embankment. The authorities concerned have yet to take any preventive measures. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Trusting many of the advisers was a mistake Says Nahid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam



claimed that many advisers in the interim government have established ties with political parties and are now thinking about their "safe exits".

He made the comments about the advisory council members in an interview with Ekhn TV aired yesterday.

He said, "It was our mistake to trust many of the advisers. We should have strengthened student leadership and entered the government with a collective approach."

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6