

Implement nine directives to stop Dhaka's air pollution

HC orders govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday further directed the government to implement its nine directives to curb air pollution in Dhaka and submit a compliance report to the court within three weeks.

The HC bench of Justice Md Rezaul Hasan and Justice Urmee Rahman gave the order while hearing a petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh in 2019.

It also fixed November 30 for passing further orders.

The directives are: covering goods in trucks and other vehicles transporting soil, sand, or waste in Dhaka; covering soil, sand, cement, stones, and construction materials in areas under construction; sprinkling water on roads by the city corporations; seizing vehicles emitting black smoke; determining the time limit for vehicle movement as per the Road Transport Act and stopping vehicles from moving after the expiry of the time limit; closing illegal brick kilns; closing all tire factories operating without environmental licenses; and taking steps to ensure daily waste bags are filled in markets and shops and removed.

3 PSTU students suspended for ragging

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Three students of Patuakhali Science and Technology University (PSTU) have been suspended for different terms over a ragging incident on the campus.

The decision was announced through an office order signed by the university's registrar, Dr Ektiar Uddin, on Wednesday, following the 41st meeting of the university's disciplinary board.

The suspended students are – Farhan Israk Khan Supto, a fourth year student of the Faculty of Agriculture, suspended for two semesters; Md Nafisul Alam Nahid, a fourth year student of the Faculty of Fisheries, suspended for one semester; and Faria Akter Natasha, a second semester student of the Faculty of Agriculture, also suspended for one semester.

The suspended students declined to comment.



Participants row in perfect synchrony during a Nouka Baich (boat race) in Uzirpur upazila, Barishal. The event, organised by the local administration, celebrates the cultural significance of this traditional sport. The photo was taken yesterday.

MAHADEO RIVER IN NETRAKONA Nollapara bridge on verge of collapse

JAYDUL ISLAM, Netrakona

The Nollapara Bridge over the Mahadeo river, which connects the Kalmakanda-Panchgaon road in the Nollapara area of Netrakona's Kalmakanda upazila, has become highly vulnerable due to soil erosion from both ends, compromising its structural integrity.

Locals continue to use the bridge amid fear of accidents, as it has developed large craters and could collapse at any moment.

The 27-metre bridge was built in 1998 to replace a smaller one that collapsed during a monsoon. It serves as the only road link between Kalmakanda upazila headquarters and Rangchhati union. People from Taherpur and Madhyanagar upazilas in Sunamganj, as well as vehicles from border areas like Panchgaon and Maheshkhali heading to Netrakona, Mymensingh, Dhaka, and Chattogram, also use this route.

Every day, around 15 to 20 long distance buses, hundreds of smaller vehicles, and

nearly 20,000 to 30,000 people cross the bridge at great risk.

During a recent visit, this correspondent found that a 15 to 20-foot long gap had appeared on the west end of the bridge after the soil underneath was washed away, leaving only the top slab for passage. Locals

disrupting communication.

"This bridge is under LGED, but there's no supervision. We've repaired it many times voluntarily, but no step has been taken for a permanent solution despite repeatedly drawing the attention of the authorities concerned," said Md Anisur Rahman Pathan, chairman of Rangchhati Union Parishad.

Md Monimul Islam, upazila engineer of LGED in Kalmakanda, said they have installed warning signs on both sides of the bridge.

"Also, the bridge has been temporarily connected with slabs to reduce public suffering. A diversion road will soon be built beside it for the movement of vehicles and pedestrians," he added.

Contacted, Md Wahiduzzaman, executive engineer of LGED in Netrakona, said the design for a new, 52-metre-long bridge to replace the risky one has already been approved, and the project proposal has been submitted for approval. The tender process will begin once it's sanctioned."

said the slab could collapse at any time, sending vehicles into the river below. The north end was found in a similar condition.

Md Rezaul Karim, a local banker, said the strong river current during monsoon washes away soil from both ends of the bridge, creating large craters and often

Locals struggle as key train routes remain suspended

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The stopover of six local and express trains in Mymensingh to various destinations in Dhaka, Jamalpur, Netrakona, and Kishoreganj has remained suspended since the pandemic, causing severe hardships for thousands of commuters.

According to railway sources, the suspended trains are the Mymensingh-Bhairab (Kishoreganji), Dhaka-Mymensingh Isha Khan Express, Mymensingh-Dewanganj, Mymensingh-Bhuapur (Tangail) Dhaleswari Express, Mymensingh-Jaria (Netrakona), and Mymensingh-Mohanganj (Netrakona).

Passengers have demonstrated, demanding that the authorities resume the services, but to no avail.

The local trains, which used to stop at every station along the respective routes, provided an affordable commute for passengers and allowed small businessmen to transport their goods.

"Earlier, we had to spend Tk 13-18 to travel 44 kilometres from Nandina in Jamalpur to Mymensingh by local and express trains, but now we have to carry goods by pickup vans, which is very costly," said Sajeda Begum, a small trader from Nandina.

"We used to pay Tk 30-35 to travel the 89 km distance from Mymensingh to Dewanganj in Jamalpur by local trains. Now it costs Tk 105 to travel the same route by intercity train. Travelling by bus or CNG-run auto-rickshaw is even more expensive," said Ahsan Habib, a college teacher.

Several others from Mymensingh, Jamalpur, and Netrakona echoed similar complaints.

Shibbir Ahmed Liton, president of the Mymensingh unit of the civic platform Shushashoner Jonno Nagarik (Shujan), called for the urgent resumption of the stoppages of local and express trains in Mymensingh.

Abdullah Al Harun, superintendent of Mymensingh station, said that the suspension of services was due to an engine crisis. He said over 5,000 passengers used to travel by local trains on these routes daily.

The history of rail connectivity to Mymensingh dates back to the British colonial era. The Eastern Bengal Railway constructed a line from Narayanganj to Mymensingh in 1886, primarily to transport jute, making it one of the earliest railway-connected towns in Bengal, sources said.

Over time, branch lines were extended to the neighbouring districts of Jamalpur, Kishoreganj, and Netrakona, improving regional trade and connectivity.

During the Pakistani era, Mymensingh remained an important regional rail hub under East Pakistan Railway. After Bangladesh's independence, Bangladesh Railway took charge of operations.

Police to don new uniforms from Nov 15; Ansar, Rab yet to finalise

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The police are moving ahead with their new uniforms, while Ansar and Rab are yet to finalise theirs -- nine months after the government decided to change the attire of law enforcement agencies amid demands for changes following the July uprising.

All metropolitan police officers across the country are set to start wearing the new uniforms from November 15.

The decision to change the uniform colours was made on January 20 at a law and order meeting at the home ministry. In line with the decision, the new police uniforms will be iron-coloured, while Rab's will be olive green and Ansar's golden wheat.

AHM Sahadat Hossain, assistant inspector general at Police Headquarters, told The Daily Star that the new uniforms will be ready by November 15.

"Other units will receive theirs gradually, except district and range police, which may take another three to four months," he said.

The uniform change came amid efforts to reform law enforcement agencies following last year's mass uprising, during which police, Rab, and Ansar were accused of using excessive force against unarmed students, leading to the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government on August 5.

While the police are ready to implement the change, Rab is awaiting the decision of a reform committee that is assessing the force's operational structure. Until then, Rab will continue to wear its black attire, said Wing Commander MZM Enthekhab Chowdhury, director of Rab's legal and media wing.

Meanwhile, Ansar has requested the ministry to reconsider the golden wheat colour.

Following a review of the proposed "golden wheat" colour for their uniform, many have criticised it as closely resembling the uniforms of private security guards, as well as the colour of jackfruits.

The force then submitted further requests to the ministry and held a meeting to select a new colour for their attire, a senior official from Ansar told The Daily Star.

The officer, requesting anonymity, said, "The decision is not final yet. The ministry is reviewing our proposals."

Contacted, Md Ashikuzzaman, deputy director of Ansar, confirmed that the process to decide on the new attire is ongoing but declined to provide details.

The uniform change came amid efforts to reform law enforcement agencies following last year's mass uprising, during which police, Rab, and Ansar were accused of using excessive force against unarmed students, leading to the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government on August 5.

Currently, around 2.14 lakh police personnel receive three sets of uniforms annually. Rab, which has about 10,000 members deputed from various forces, also receives three sets each year. Ansar, with about 51,000 general and 17,000 battalion members, gets two sets of uniforms annually.

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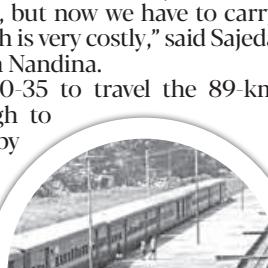
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Matters related to the dissemination of misinformation and disinformation by the media regarding the "Peak Season Surcharge (PSS)" imposed by Maersk Line on containers from West Africa to Bangladesh

The recent announcement of imposition of Peak Season Surcharge (PSS) by Maersk Line on container shipment from various ports of West Africa to Bangladesh has come to the notice of the Chittagong Port Authority. Some online news media are circulating misinformation and disinformation that such surcharges are imposed due to the increase of tariff by the Chittagong Port Authority. However, Maersk Line has already clarified on 27 October 2025 that the PSS has no connection with any tariff changes made by the CPA. The Chittagong Port Authority categorically states that there is currently no congestion or operational disruption at the Chittagong Port. Arrival of vessels, container unloading and delivery operation are being carried out properly and smoothly maintaining international standards. The development activities of the Chittagong port are progressing at a significant pace with transparency. At present, there is no berthing delay, and the vessel waiting time is nearly zero. At times, the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) is observing that some jetties remain vacant due to temporary shortage of incoming vessels. It is further emphasized that all development projects of the Chittagong Port are being implemented from its own revenue. Over and above, the imposition of PSS by Maersk Line bears no relation to the new tariff schedule determined by the Government. It is worth noting that in September 2025, CMA-CGM, MSC and Maersk Line announced Port Cost Recovery Surcharge on the Chittagong Port Authority. However, all shipping lines through a letter issued by them subsequently withdrew that announcement again in this month and informed that to the Chittagong Port Authority.

GD-2285

Secretary
Chittagong Port Authority



GD-2282

Mohammad Moin Uddin Hayat
Principal