



NATION HONOURS MARTYRS OF THE LIBERATION WAR

The nation marked its 56th Independence and National Day with solemn yet vibrant tributes to the Liberation War martyrs, as President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman placed wreaths at the National Memorial in Savar yesterday. Throughout the day, people from all walks of life -- including students and persons with disabilities -- along with political, social, and cultural organisations, arrived with flowers to honour the fallen. Leaders from various parties, including Jamaat-e-Islami and CPB, also paid their respects.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN, PID



274 killed on roads in 10-day Eid holidays

Says Road Safety Foundation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 274 people were killed and over 1,500 injured across the country during the 10-day Eid-ul-Fitr travel period, according to the Road Safety Foundation (RSF).

The casualties occurred in 342 road accidents between March 16 and 26, the RSF said.

In comparison, 249 people were killed and 553 injured in 257 accidents during last year's Eid-ul-Fitr holidays, it added.

Among the incidents, the deadliest one occurred in Rajbari's Daulatdia, where a bus plunged into the Padma river while waiting to board a ferry on Tuesday.

At least 26 bodies have been recovered, including 11 women, eight men, and seven children. Twenty-two bodies have been handed over to their families.

Another major accident took place on March 22 in Cumilla's Jangalia Kochua area, when at least 12 people were killed after a mail train hit a Mamun Paribahan bus at a level crossing. Another 20 were injured.

RSF Executive Director Saidur Rahman said most accidents stem from poor management, lack of monitoring, and negligence in the transport sector.

For instance, he said, the Daulatdia tragedy reflects widespread mismanagement.

"Reckless driving, unfit vehicles, poor road management, and weak law enforcement are the main causes of road accidents in the country," he told The Daily Star.

He also said clear policies

on drivers' working hours -- particularly for long distance bus and truck drivers -- must be introduced and enforced.

The Bangladesh Passenger Welfare Association (BPWA), however, reported slightly different figures, saying at least 285 people were killed and 729 injured in 270 accidents between March 18 and 25.

Last year, 322 people died in 315 accidents during the same period, it said.



Talking to The Daily Star, BPWA General Secretary Mojammel Haque said probe reports into major accidents are rarely published, allowing similar incidents to recur every year.

"The causes are identified, but no effective steps are taken. The previous government ignored many of these incidents, allowing transport owners to act recklessly. We now see the current government also speaking on their behalf. As a result, the owners continue to act irresponsibly," he added.

Meanwhile, Highway Police reported at least 90 deaths and 128 injuries in 142 accidents during the Eid period.

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Unlicensed kitchen markets plague DSCC

Only 12 of 116 within Dhaka South registered

DIPAN NANDY

Only 12 of the 116 private kitchen markets operating under the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) are legally registered, while the remaining 104 continue to operate without oversight, often encroaching on footpaths or land owned by government agencies and private individuals.

Although these markets supply essential goods to lakhs of residents, their lack of registration hampers revenue collection and raises concerns over public health, fire safety, and urban management.

To regulate such establishments, the DSCC introduced a policy in 2022 requiring all private markets -- excluding supershops and shopping malls -- to obtain licences.

However, enforcement has been slow. According to data from the DSCC Estate Department, only 12 private markets have registered in the last three and a half years. Of them, only Shantinagar Kitchen Market has a valid, up-to-date licence.

Under the 2022 policy, a private market is defined as any land or establishment where daily trade takes place between multiple buyers and sellers. Operators must obtain a licence from the Estate Department, renew it annually, and comply with zoning, health, and safety regulations.

Failure to comply is a punishable offence under Section 92 of the City Corporation Act, which allows authorities to shut down markets, impose fines, or take legal action.

The licensing process is relatively affordable. Applicants must pay a Tk 500 fee, followed by an annual renewal fee -- Tk 215 per square metre for markets on main roads and Tk



108 per square metre for those on secondary roads. For example, a 1,500-square-metre market on a main road would require an annual fee of Tk 2.15 lakh.

On September 2 last year, the DSCC issued a public notice reiterating that operating without a valid licence is illegal and punishable under the Local Government (City Corporation)

Act, 2009.

DSCC Chief Estate Officer Mobasswer Hasan told The Daily Star, "As the policy is new, many people are still unaware of it. We are working to raise awareness. After Eid, we will begin conducting mobile courts against illegal markets."

He added that the corporation plans to re-inspect these sites to assess their suitability for commercial use. "We will verify whether the locations are appropriate for markets before making a final decision," he said.

Urban planner Adil Mohammed Khan said operating private raw markets without licences is unlawful, as it violates the 2022 policy.

He noted that these markets generate significant revenue, a portion of which should go to the city corporation.

Calling it a failure of authorities, he said many markets remain unlicensed.

He also questioned how such markets continue to operate and under whose patronage, suggesting the possible involvement of syndicates engaged in extortion or informal collections.

"These practices deprive the government of legitimate revenue. Authorities should identify such syndicates and investigate whether political figures, influential groups, or law enforcement members are involved."

Adil Mohammed Khan, Urban planner

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Zubaida stresses global partnership for child welfare

UNB, Dhaka

Dr Zubaida Rahman, spouse of Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, joined the closing session of the "Fostering the Future Together: Global Coalition Summit" at the White House in Washington, DC on Wednesday.

The two-day summit, attended by first ladies and spouses of leaders from over 45 countries, focused on advancing children's well-being and future prospects. Dr Zubaida participated at the invitation of US First Lady Melania Trump.

Leading a four-member delegation, she was accompanied by Dhaka University Professor



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Dhaka-Delhi ties vital for shared prosperity

Says Bangladesh envoy

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Riaz Hamidullah has underscored the strategic and people-centric importance of India-Bangladesh ties amid a shifting global order.

Addressing the Independence Day reception hosted by the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi, he said Dhaka places high importance on its partnership with New Delhi, calling it vital for shared prosperity and regional stability, reports The New Indian Express.

Indian Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh attended the event as the guest of honour while Foreign Secretary Vikram

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Boats remain moored along the banks of the Buriganga in Keraniganj upazila of Dhaka, as the city has yet to return fully to its usual hustle and bustle following the Eid holidays. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

BEGUM ROKEYA UNIVERSITY, RANGPUR

Liberation War monument lies incomplete after 13yrs

S DILIP ROY

Construction of "Swadhinata Smarak", the first Liberation War monument on Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur (BRUR) campus, remains incomplete even after 13 years, despite the change of five vice-chancellors at the university.

The monument has an 11,696-square-foot base, featuring three fringe-like stone pillars that symbolise the participation of people from different walks of life and their sacrifices in the Liberation War.

A 20-foot tunnel-like canopy will connect the pillars, representing the unity and collective struggle of the people during the war. The pillars will bear engravings depicting wartime memories, with murals behind them.

According to BRUR sources, the monument's construction began in December 2012 during the tenure of the then vice-chancellor Prof Md Abdul Jalil Mia, with funding from Janata Bank.

The foundation stone was laid on November 28, 2013, by the then VC Prof Dr AKM Nur-un-Nabi. However, the work was halted shortly afterwards. Later, the construction work resumed during the

tenure of the following VC, Prof Dr Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah.

The project's cost was initially estimated at Tk 1.30 crore. Later, the then VC Prof Kalimullah proposed increasing the budget to Tk 4.30 crore.

However, following allegations of corruption in the project, the Ministry of Education in December 2019 instructed the university to conduct an investigation through the University Grants Commission (UGC).

As the investigation found evidence supporting the allegations, the ministry halted the work of three major projects of the university -- the Swadhinata Smarak, a research institute, and a 10-storey female dormitory. Since then, these projects

have remained stalled for years. Although the construction of the research institute and the female dormitory resumed recently, work on the Swadhinata Smarak did not.

Tasbiul Habib Nishad, a student of the Political Science department, said, "The current administration has resumed many stalled projects. I hope the work on this monument will also begin soon."

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