Battery rickshaw registration now mandatory in cities

Highways, major bus routes off-limits

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has made registration mandatory for battery-powered rickshaws operating in city corporation areas and barred them from highways, expressways, and major bus routes under new regulations that took effect yesterday.

The Local Government Division issued the Three-Wheeled Low-Speed Battery-Operated Rickshaw (E-Rickshaw) Movement Rules, 2026, through a gazette notification yesterday. The rules apply to all city corporations across Bangladesh.

City corporations, with prior government approval and in consultation with traffic authorities, will determine the number of e-rickshaws permitted to operate within their jurisdictions. The authorities will also jointly designate operating zones, routes and vehicle colours.

An e-rickshaw authorised to operate in one zone will not be allowed to enter another zone. Similarly, a vehicle registered in one city corporation cannot be used in another.

Under the rules, the one-time registration fee has been fixed at Tk 8,000 for e-rickshaws designed to carry two passengers and Tk 10,000 for vehicles designed for four passengers. Annual renewal fees will be Tk 4,000 and Tk 5,000, respectively, while a fitness certificate will cost Tk 1,000.

All e-rickshaws must comply with technical and safety standards prescribed by Buet.



PHOTO: STAR

Garment workers block a road in Mirpur-10, Dhaka, yesterday, demanding a minimum monthly wage of Tk 30,000 and other benefits. The protest triggered severe traffic congestion in neighbouring areas, leaving commuters stranded for hours.

IN FOCUS

Info Commission eyes local-level complaint hearings

Says chief commissioner at seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Information Commission is considering extending complaint-hearing facilities to district and upazila levels to help people outside Dhaka exercise their right to information.

Chief Information Commissioner Prof Nahreen Islam Khan announced the plan at a seminar titled "From Information to Participation: Using the Right to Information to Strengthen Open and Accountable Governance" yesterday.

Organised by Research Initiatives Bangladesh (RIB) with support from the National Endowment for Democracy, the event highlighted barriers to accessing information.

"We want to extend these facilities to district and upazila levels. This is my first priority," Prof Nahreen said, responding to concerns over the cost and difficulty of travelling to Dhaka for hearings.

She said 917 complaints were pending when the new commission took office, with more than 100 additional complaints filed in its first five working days. The commission has only 23 employees, fewer than half its sanctioned workforce.

Plans include introducing mobile-phone acknowledgements for complaints, holding information fairs and establishing a research wing.

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Social stigma, legal gaps keep hijra people out of jobs

Speakers seek special quotas, stronger legal protection

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than a decade after the state recognised the hijra community as a "third gender", legal, financial and workplace barriers continue to hinder their economic inclusion, speakers said at a roundtable yesterday.

They called for specific protection laws, special quotas, and greater private-sector recruitment to integrate the community into the economic mainstream rather than keep them dependent on allowances.

The roundtable, titled "From Margins to Mainstream: Fostering Hijra Employment and Economic Inclusion", was jointly organised by Bandhu Social Welfare Society and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka.

Hijra community representatives highlighted the institutional discrimination they face in education and employment, as well as in daily life.

Makeup artist and entrepreneur Mrinalini Devi said she could not continue her studies after passing her SSC exams in 2018 due to physical

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PHOTO: STAR

Speakers at a roundtable jointly organised by Bandhu Social Welfare Society and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre yesterday.



Tahmima Anam's 'Good Books' set for TV adaptation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Writer Tahmima Anam's upcoming novel "Good Books", which explores the world of publishing, is being adapted for television by Pacesetter Productions and Kudos, Variety has reported.

Tahmima Anam is adapting the novel alongside Emmy-nominated writer and producer Alison Brown, whose credits include "Emily in Paris", "Younger" and "Upload".

The book was announced at the Edinburgh Book Festival, where UK publisher Canongate revealed it had acquired the title for publication in 2028. Scribner, Canongate's frequent US publishing partner, acquired the North American rights.

The publisher described the novel as "'The Devil Wears Prada' meets 'Yellowface'",

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Dhaka lost half of its waterbodies in 35yrs

Finds study by Urban Development Directorate

The study identified eight of the 18 rivers shown on James Rennell's 1776 map as having disappeared. These are the Ati, Dolai, Herra, Konai, Narai, Painar, Pandu, and Shing rivers.



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka and its peripheral areas have lost nearly half of their water bodies over the past 35 years, with the total water area shrinking by 48 percent between 1990 and 2025, according to a study by the Urban Development Directorate (UDD).

The study found that the total water area across a 3,126.64 square-kilometre region covering Dhaka and seven peripheral districts declined from around 304 square kilometres in 1990 to 159 square kilometres in 2025.

The findings were presented at an event titled Consultation Workshop-02 yesterday.

The study also found that 1,418 of the 2,547 ponds recorded within Dhaka city corporation areas have disappeared, accounting for 55.7 percent of the total.

Comparing historical maps with recent satellite imagery, the study identified eight of the 18 rivers shown on James Rennell's 1776 map as having disappeared. These are the Ati, Dolai, Herra, Konai, Narai, Painar, Pandu, and Shing rivers. The Dhaleswari river also lost 62 percent of its area.

The research drew on historical maps from 1776 to 2026, government studies, satellite imagery covering 1990–2025, field surveys, interviews and stakeholder consultations.

At the workshop, Prof Ishrat Islam of BUET's Department of Urban and Regional Planning stressed the need to involve relevant departments and organisations, including BELA, BAPA and the Department of Environment.

Mahmud Ali, director (additional secretary) of UDD, emphasised the need for government and private organisations to work together to develop a comprehensive inventory of existing and historical water bodies.

Representatives from Rajuk, DNCC, DSCC, the National River Conservation Commission, and the River and Delta Research Centre attended the workshop.

The study is expected to produce a geographic information system (GIS)-ready database of historical and existing water bodies, map missing links between rivers and canals, and assess changes in water-body coverage.

It will also recommend rivers and canals for priority re-excavation and propose policy measures for wetland protection, buffer-zone management, and the integration of water-body conservation into urban planning.

Woman's death sparks murder allegation

Family alleges abuse by husband; inquest report notes marks on neck, face

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The death of a 24-year-old woman in Dhaka's Monipuripara has prompted allegations of domestic abuse, with her family claiming she was murdered and her in-laws saying she died by suicide.

Maratun Nessa Barsha was taken to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital unconscious early Wednesday, where doctors declared her dead.

Her husband, Nabid Hossain, has been arrested in a case filed under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act and sent to jail, police said.

Barsha's family alleged that Nabid repeatedly assaulted her over money. Her younger sister, Ramisu Nessa Megh, said their mother received a video call from Barsha at 12:17am Wednesday.

"I saw blood on my sister's face and took a screenshot. But before she could say anything, the call was disconnected," Megh told The Daily Star.

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'Abul Mansur Ahmad's ideas offer lessons for constitutional reform'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abul Mansur Ahmad argued in Pakistan's Constituent Assembly in 1956 that lawmakers cannot draft a constitution according to their own wishes while disregarding the commitments made to the people, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

They said Abul Mansur Ahmad opposed Pakistan's first constitution, arguing that it violated the principles of the Lahore Resolution and the electoral pledges of the United Front.

They also said his arguments on provincial autonomy, democracy and the equitable distribution of power in a federal system remain relevant to Bangladesh's ongoing constitutional reform debate.

The discussion, titled "Abul Mansur Ahmad in the Constituent Assembly (1956): Democracy, Sovereignty and Federal Pakistan", was organised by the Reading Club Trust at the Bangla Academy.

Taimur Reza, assistant professor of history and philosophy at North South University, said the 1956 Constitution contradicted the commitments made at Pakistan's founding by disregarding the Lahore Resolution's principle of autonomous provinces.

He explained that Abul Mansur Ahmad viewed Pakistan as a state formed through the mutual consent of autonomous provinces, making the resolution fundamental to understanding the country's constitutional basis.

Reza also highlighted the United

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Md Lokman Hussain, senior lecturer in the law department at North South University, speaks at the discussion organised by the Reading Club Trust at Bangla Academy yesterday. PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN