



# The Daily Star

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Your Right to Know

JAMADUL AWAL 17, 1441 HJRI

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**"It is unfortunate that those who have passed the electoral code of conduct are now opposing it."**  
 ELECTION COMMISSIONER MAHBUB TALUKDAR ABOUT ALLOWING MPS, MINISTERS IN ELECTION-RELATED ACTIVITIES (PAGE 3)



**"We are noticing repeated attacks on those working for upholding the spirit of the Liberation War and these attacks are not being stopped."**  
 RIGHTS ACTIVIST SULTANA KAMAL AT A RALLY (PAGE 3)



**"Number one priority is to get rid of Donald Trump. I'm spending all my money to get rid of Trump."**  
 US PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE HOPEFUL MICHAEL BLOOMBERG (PAGE 8)



## Payra coal power plant takes off

The 1,320MW unit is the first large power plant to come into operation under AL gov't; by 2030, total generation capacity to reach 40,000MW

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON

Coal-fired Payra power plant in Patuakhali began test production yesterday, making it the first large-scale plant to come into operation since the Awami League swept to power a decade ago.

One hundred megawatt electricity generated by the plant in Kalapara upazila was added to the national grid at 11:05am, said AM Khurshedul Alam, the acting managing director of Bangladesh-China Power Company (BCPCL), which owns the plant.

"The supply will go up gradually," said State Minister for Energy and Power Nasrul Hamid in his verified Facebook page after the first unit of the 1,320-MW plant went into production.

One of the mega projects of the AL-government, Payra power plant is the first in Bangladesh to run on imported coal. Now Indonesian coal is being used and later Australian coal would be used.

The plant would be fed sub-bituminous coal, a variety relatively inexpensive and less harmful to the environment.



The government has run ads in Germany, Singapore, and Indonesia for importing coal through competitive bidding.

Payra plant is the second coal-fired power plant in the country. The first one is the 250MW Barapukuria Power Station in Dinajpur, which uses local coal.

The plant is part of the government's efforts to diversify energy amid depleting gas reserves and to feed the growing economy.

More coal power plants are on the way. Rural Power Company and Chinese state-owned Norinco International Cooperation

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## Mob beats 3 to death on suspicion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Three suspected cattle lifters were beaten to death by an angry mob in Jashore's Abhaynagar upazila early yesterday.

The identities of the deceased, aged between 35 and 45, could not be confirmed till filing of this report last night, said police.

Tajul Islam, officer-in-charge of Abhaynagar Police Station, said a group of thieves was trying to escape from the barn of Khorshed Ali with three cows in Gaidgachhi village of Jashore Sadar upazila around 4:00am.

Sensing the presence of cattle lifters, Khorshed screamed for help. As an announcement was made on the loudspeaker of a local mosque about the incident, a mob rushed there.

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## ILLEGAL CASINO BUSINESS

### Absconding AL duo arrested

The two brothers own 22 houses and plots in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two brothers who allegedly ran a casino illegally were arrested in Dhaka's Keraniganj yesterday.

The Criminal Investigation Department of police arrested Enamul Haque Enu, vice-president of Gendaria Awami League, and Rupon Bhuiyan, joint general secretary of the same AL unit, at a rented flat where they had been living after failing to flee the country with forged passports.

Enamul and Rupon went into hiding after law enforcers launched a crackdown on illegal casinos, bars, spas and graft last year.

Wanderers Club, of which Enamul was the director, was raided by Rapid Action Battalion on September 18, the first day of the crackdown.

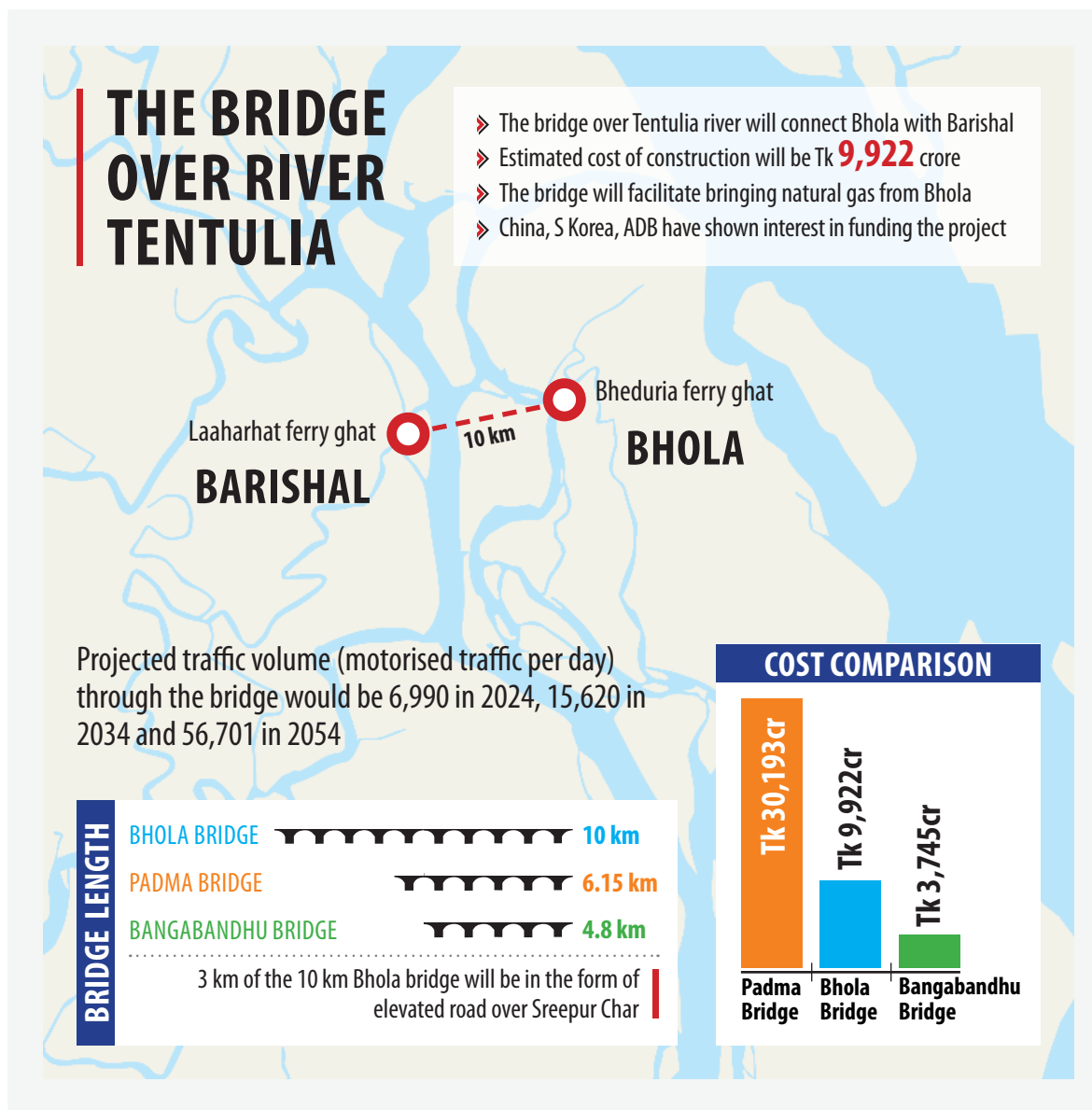
An aide to the two brothers, Sheikh Mostafa Sunny, was also arrested at the time.

The two brothers have 22 houses and plots in the capital, five cars, and Tk 19.11 crore in 91 bank accounts

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Enamul Rupon



## Longest bridge to link Bhola, Barishal

Gov't plans it over Tentulia river, looking for donor

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The government is going to build the country's longest bridge over the Tentulia river to connect island district Bhola with Barishal.

The cost of the 10km bridge is estimated at Tk 9,922 crore, almost one-third that of the under-construction Padma bridge, which will be 6.15km long. However, the cost may escalate after the detailed design is finalised.

Once built, the bridge in the country's southern part will shorten the travel time between the two districts and facilitate gas supply from Bhola, said officials.

Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA) had already completed the feasibility study, which selected possible alignment of the bridge, they said.

"We are looking for donors,"

Belayet Hossain, secretary (bridges division) of the road transport and bridges ministry, told The Daily Star on Sunday.

They will write to Economic Relations Division (ERD) soon requesting it to manage fund for the bridge, he said.

Earlier in the day (Sunday), added the secretary, Asian Development Bank Country Director for Bangladesh Manmohan Parkash in a meeting with him showed an interest in funding three projects of BBA, and the Bhola bridge is one of them.

Officials said based on survey, study and discussions, the bridge alignment was fixed at about a few hundred metres downstream the Bheduria Ferry Ghat on the Bhola side and the Laaharhat Ferry Ghat on the Barishal mainland side from the existing highway.

Of the 10km of the bridge, about

3km will be over Sreepur Char which separates two channels of the braided river, they said.

BBA Chief Engineer Quazi Muhammad Ferdous said the bridge would open up a scope for bringing in natural gas from Bhola as it would have facilities to carry gas through pipelines.

In January 2018, Mohammad Shafiqul Alam, the then cabinet secretary, said explorers found a staggering 600 billion cubic feet of gas at Bheduria union, about 32km north of the Shahbazpur Gas Field in Bhola.

With the discovery, Bhola's gas reserve stood at 1.5 trillion cubic feet, he had told reporters.

**BRIDGE TO BOOST BUSINESS, COMMUNICATION**  
 Separated by the Tentulia river, Bhola is on the eastern part of the Barishal

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## PUBLIC HOSPITALS Outrage over circular on publication of info

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

A government circular banning publication of any public hospital's information without the consent from the authorities concerned has sparked criticisms with media professionals and experts considering the move as a blow to press freedom.

Termining the restriction arbitrary, they said such steps go against the spirit of the Right to Information Act, 2009 and demanded the immediate withdrawal of the ban for the sake of people's right to information.

On Sunday, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare issued the circular to the chiefs of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), medical college hospitals and specialised hospitals.

The circular, signed by Deputy Secretary Abu Raihan Mian, said taking

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## Khulna through to the final

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League (BBPL) will now see three teams vie for the trophy following yesterday's first eliminator and first qualifier matches. Dhaka Platoon were eliminated with a seven-wicket defeat at the hands of the Chattogram Challengers in the eliminator at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur while Khulna Tigers became the first team to make it through to the all-important final by defeating Rajshahi Royals by 27 runs in the first

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Nazmul Haque bathing cattle at his farm in Kurigram. Many farmers like him are rearing cattle in the district and in Lalmonirhat with the support of iFarmer, the country's first digital agriculture platform working to provide capital to livestock farmers by linking them with fund providers. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Making life a little easier for farmers

iFarmer, country's first digital agro-platform, links funders and farmers to support livestock farming

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

As a farmer's wife in a remote village of Lalmonirhat, Aklima Begum's life was never easy. She and her husband used to grow rice in her 90-decimal land in Ramdash village in the district. With the crop, they could hardly meet the expenditures of her seven-member family.

But six months ago, Aklima's life took a turn for the better, when she got an offer for rearing cattle from an organisation named iFarmer. She was given five cows at a cost of Tk 2.50 lakh. She was supposed to rear the cattle for four months and sell those in the market.

"I reared the cattle for two and a half months and sold those for Tk 2.90 lakh. I got Tk 20,000 as profit within just two and a half months," Aklima told The Daily Star over phone.

It inspired her to rear a few more cows. She has now seven cows and will get three more soon.

"The best part is that it is not a loan. It is a financial support to my family," Aklima said.

Many smallholder farmers like Aklima see a new hope thanks to iFarmer as the organisation helps increase their earning.

iFarmer is the first digital agriculture platform of the country focused on linking interested sponsors/funders with farmers to support livestock farming while promoting inclusive growth in livestock and agriculture.

Founded in August 2018, its business model is based on profit sharing between the farmers, farm sponsors and iFarmer. The farmer and the sponsor share profit after completing each cycle. This model could enable the farmers to be more motivated to invest in better inputs and farming practices to ensure better return.

The country's farm sector is dominated by smallholders but the small and marginal farmers have the least access to the credit and agricultural extension services provided by the state.

iFarmer connects individuals and institutions with farmers through a sponsorship package to fund farming and agriculture for a share of the returns.

It provides easy access to capital for underprivileged farmers by connecting them with potential farm sponsors. Farm Sponsors select the kind of farms they want

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