



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

www.thedailystar.net

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RAJAB 8, 1441 HURI



REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XXX No. 51

FALGUN 20, 1426 BS

20 PAGES PRICE: Tk 12.00



An excavator knocks down the boundary fence of a private power plant during an eviction drive of the BIWTA at Charwashpur of Keraniganj near the confluence of the Buriganga and Turag rivers yesterday. Inset, a storage tank is being demolished. Story on page 16.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

BANGABANDHU RAILWAY BRIDGE PROJECT

Cost revised, goes up by 72pc

Project okayed with Tk 7,047cr increased cost

REJAU KARIM BYRON and
TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The cost of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Railway Bridge Construction Project has gone up to Tk 16,781 crore from Tk 9,734 crore.

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) revised the project at a meeting yesterday. The meeting was held at the planning ministry with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair. The railway bridge will be built a few hundred yards north of the existing Bangabandhu Multipurpose Bridge over the Jamuna.

The duration of the project was extended by two years, meaning the work would be completed by December 2025.

The work of the project is yet to begin while the Ecne approved it in 2016 without any detailed design.

According to the project document, cost of two main work packages saw a huge

» Cost estimated earlier Tk 9,734cr

» Cost after revision Tk 16,781cr

» Project deadline now Dec 2025

rise after the detailed design was made in September 2018.

Besides, costs of land acquisition, land lease and building a museum were also included in the project, causing a jump in the total cost.

Increased VAT and customs duties are also responsible for the cost escalation, documents obtained by The Daily Star show.

The new 4.8km-long bridge will be built some 300 meters upstream of the Bangabandhu Bridge.

Once built, the dual-gauge double-track bridge would be the largest dedicated rail bridge in the country.

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CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Suspend on-arrival visas

Health ministry recommends for nat'l's of 3 countries

MOUJIB AHMED SUJAN

The ministry of health has recommended a restriction on the visa-on-arrival service for citizens of Iran, South Korea, and Italy as the coronavirus has hit these countries.

Health Secretary Asaduzzaman confirmed this to The Daily Star yesterday evening.

"We have given the recommendation to the home ministry. They might have taken the measures," Md Asaduzzaman, secretary of the ministry of health and family welfare, said.

However, The Daily Star could not reach any official of the home ministry to confirm this.

Earlier on February 2, the government temporarily restricted the

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Air pollution cuts lives by three years

Finds study

AFP, Paris

A "pandemic" of air pollution shortens lives worldwide by nearly three years on average, and causes 8.8 million premature deaths annually, scientists said yesterday.

Eliminating the toxic cocktail of molecules and lung-clogging particles cast off by burning oil, gas and coal would restore a full year of life expectancy, they reported in the journal Cardiovascular Research.

"Air pollution is a larger public health risk than tobacco smoking," lead author Jos Lelieveld of the Max Planck Institute in Mainz, Germany told AFP.

"Much of it can be avoided by replacing fossil fuels with clean renewable

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ILLEGAL LOGGING IN KHAGRACHHARI

5 killed as villagers clash with BGB

Deceased include a BGB member; all of them bullet-hit; probe body formed

STAR REPORT

At least five people, including a member of Border Guard Bangladesh, were killed and several others injured in a clash between members of the paramilitary force and villagers in Khagrachhari's Matiranga upazila yesterday, police said.

The clash took place as BGB members tried to stop a timber-laden truck at the upazila's Gazinagar village around 11:30am and were resisted by the traders, said MM Salauddin, additional superintendent of police in the district.

Soon, a group of villagers joined the traders, he said, adding that BGB personnel had to open fire to bring the situation under control.

The situation was brought under control

after around two hours, he said.

Khagrachhari Deputy Commissioner Pratap Chandra Biswas, who visited the spot after the incident, said, "BGB personnel wanted to seize a timber-laden truck in Gazinagar area. An altercation broke out between them and labourers, which later turned into a clash."

He identified the deceased as Shahab Mia, 54, his two sons, Ali Akbar, 27 and Ahmad Ali, 26; their relative Mafiz Mia, 55, and BGB soldier Md Shaon, 28.

The DC said four of the victims were killed on the spot, while fatally injured Mafiz died on his way to the Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

In a press statement, the BGB said

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Tamim's best seals series

MAZHAR UDDIN from Sylhet

Even after Tamim Iqbal's career-best score boosted Bangladesh to a huge total of 322 for six, the hosts managed to win the second ODI by the skin of their teeth as Zimbabwe fought

till the end but fell short by just four runs and surrendered the three-match series 2-0 at the Sylhet International Stadium yesterday.

Needing 20 off the last over, Donald Tiripano struck two sixes off pacer AL-Amin Hossain and perhaps celebrated too early when reaching his fifty as Zimbabwe required six runs off the last two balls.

AL-Amin however managed to calm his nerves and restricted Tiripano and sealed a nerve-wracking win for the hosts.

But it was Tamim who stole the show after he struck his 12th ODI hundred and was dismissed for 158 off 136 balls, which featured 20 fours and three sixes. The left-hander reached quite a few milestones as he registered the highest individual score by a Bangladeshi in the format, surpassing his own previous best of 154 against the same opponents in Bulawayo.

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Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal plays one of his trademark shots on way to scoring a career-best 158 in the second ODI against Zimbabwe at the Sylhet International Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



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