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RECORD HOLDER
SHAH CEMENT

ROAD REPAIR FUND COLLECTION

Move stalled for years

Law made for this purpose in 2013 remains not implemented

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges took steps to collect toll from major highways for road maintenance, but an initiative to raise dedicated fund for the same purpose remained stalled for years.

In July 2013, parliament passed Road Maintenance Fund Board Act to form a board to raise and manage a fund for repairing and maintaining roads.

Although the law came into effect in December 2014, the 12-member board remained largely non-functional for the last six and a half years and managed to raise no fund at all. During the time, the authorities could neither formulate rules nor fianalise organogram for the board.

Moreover, they could not fix the process of collecting money for the fund from the Ministry of Finance.

As a result, Roads and Highways Department (RHD) has to collect fund for maintaining and repairing roads following the conventional process which is time consuming. Besides, the fund now RHD gets to maintain around 22,000-kilometre network is very insufficient, said officials.

In the latest development, a committee, formed to review the draft rules prepared in 2018 and prepare an organogram for the board, submitted its report last month.

The board was scheduled to hold its next meeting today to settle this issues, said Anwar Hossain Chowdhury, additional secretary of Road Transport and Highways Division and acting chief executive officer of the board,

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This photo taken recently in Tejgaon shows two motorcyclists blatantly disregarding the law, as well as a sign in front of them, and riding their vehicles on the pavement.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

'I only want my father back unhurt'

Says journo Kajol's son; case finally filed; Amnesty asks govt to locate him

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family members, friends, and colleagues of missing journalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol yesterday demanded that the government find him immediately.

They made the demand at two human chain programmes in the capital.

Speaking at one of the programmes in front of the Jatiya Press Club, Kajol's son Monorom Polok said tracing a person in this modern era was not difficult for the government.

"All I want is to get my father back, safe, and unhurt," he said.

"Baba, we want you back very soon. Ma, my little sister and I are waiting for you."

Covering their faces with black cloths, some photojournalists formed another human chain in front of the National Museum.

At the event, Drik Gallery

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

Coronavirus test in 15 mins for Tk 350!

Gonoshasthaya Kendra claims to have developed a kit; awaits govt nod for going into production

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A team of Gonoshasthaya-RNA Biotech Limited, a sister concern of Gonoshasthaya Kendra, claims to have developed an affordable kit that can detect novel coronavirus infection in 15 minutes.

Gonoshasthaya is now awaiting government approval for going into full-scale production.

"It's true. It's a different method of detecting coronavirus. It's called Rapid Dot Blot," Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury, founder and trustee member of Gonoshasthaya Kendra, told The Daily Star yesterday. "Each kit would cost only Tk 300 to Tk 350."

The team consists of Bijon Kumar Sil, the lead researcher, Nihad Adnan, Raeed Jamiruddin and Firoz Ahmed. Bijon was among the researchers who had developed a kit to diagnose SARS coronavirus in 2003, he said.

"Rapid Dot Blot is patented under his

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

25-year Indo-Bangla Friendship Treaty signed

It's a warm handshake for Indira Gandhi as Bangabandhu says au revoir at the Dhaka airport on March 19, 1972.

MUJIB 100

MARCH 19, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

INDO-BANGLADESH TREATY AND JOINT DECLARATION

A historic 25-year treaty is signed between Bangladesh and India today. The treaty of friendship, cooperation and peace between the two countries is signed at Bangabhaban by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for Bangladesh and Indira Gandhi for India. The treaty is similar to the one earlier signed

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Gatherings at tourist spots banned

Move comes after hundreds crowded beaches

STAR REPORT

Authorities yesterday imposed a ban on public gatherings at different tourist spots in Cox's Bazar, Sylhet, Chattogram and Patuakhali to prevent the risk of spreading coronavirus.

Cox's Bazar district administration yesterday afternoon imposed restrictions on tourist arrival in the city and all sort of gatherings at beaches.

The district administration and tourist police asked authorities of all hotels and motels not to allow any new guests, said Kamal Hossain, deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar.

Besides, the visitors, who were staying at different hotels, have been asked to return their respective houses, the DC said.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

103-yr-old Iranian woman survives coronavirus

AFP, *Tehran*

A 103-year-old woman in Iran has recovered after being infected with the new coronavirus, state media reported, despite overwhelming evidence the elderly are most at risk from the disease.

The unnamed woman had been hospitalised in the central city of Semnan for about a week, IRNA news agency said.

But she was "discharged after making a complete recovery", Semnan University of Medical Sciences head Navid Danayi was quoted as saying by IRNA late Tuesday.

The woman was the second elderly patient in Iran to have survived the disease.

The other was a 91-year-old man from Kerman, in the southeast of Iran, the news agency said.

After being sick for three days, he recovered on Monday despite having pre-existing medical

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

ABRAR MURDER

Case moved to speedy trial tribunal

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Buet student Abrar Fahad murder case was yesterday transferred to the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 of Dhaka for quick disposal.

Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of the Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order in the presence of 22 out of the 25 accused in the case.

Earlier, the government decided to hold trial of the case at the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1. In line with the government decision, the law ministry on March 12 sent a letter to the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka that was holding the trial.

The Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 of Dhaka set April 6 for hearing on the charge framing against the accused.

Abrar, a second-year student of electrical and electronic engineering

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

A man pours dodgy water into two-litre bottles collected every morning from launches at the Patuakhali Launch Terminal yesterday. These bottles are then sold to launch passengers for Tk 10 each.

PHOTO: SOHRAB HOSSAIN

12 fined for violating home quarantine rules

STAR REPORT

Mobile courts in different districts have fined at least 12 expatriates between Tuesday night and yesterday afternoon for not abiding by the government-mandated home quarantine of 14 days.

In Chattogram, five expatriates, who returned from Oman, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, have been fined by mobile courts yesterday.

The mobile court ran drives in Hathazari, Raozan, Anwara, Patia upazilas, to check whether people were following the government directive urging all foreign returnees to self-quarantine for fourteen days, said AZM Sharif Hossain, additional district magistrate of Chattogram.

Among them, three returnees from United Arab Emirate, and two from Saudi Arabia and Oman, were fined Tk 10,000 each, he said.

Anyone coming from abroad are compelled to stay in their homes in quarantine for 14 days, but they (the five men) were walking outside without paying heed to the directive, Sharif said.

The fines were imposed as per Section 269 of the Penal Code, he added.

In Madaripur, two people, one returnee from Italy and the other from Spain, were fined by a mobile court in Kalkini upazila yesterday afternoon.

The mobile court led by Aminul Islam, upazila nirbahi officer (UNO), fined the Italy returnee, who came to Bangladesh on March 9, with Tk 5,000 while the Spain returnee, who landed in the country on

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PRAYER TIMING MARCH 19

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	5-00	12-45	4-30	6-14	7-45
JAMAAT	5-35	1-15	4-45	6-18	8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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