

Roads &

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and suspended operation of most of the public transport from March 26 to contain the spread of Covid-19. Most RHD projects remained suspended for over two months.

RHD resumed the work in May and is trying to accelerate the process since the government lifted the shutdown from May 31. It is now implementing some 180 development projects.

THE DEAL

Under the deal, a joint venture firm of Chinese company CR24B and Bangladesh company Spectra Ltd will build 13 bridges within two years at the cost Tk 427.66 crore.

On the other hand, Concord-Pragat Construction Ltd will build eight bridges within two years at the cost of Tk 222 crore, the project documents show.

The government in October 2015 took the WBBIP to build 61 bridges in 26 western districts aiming for safe, efficient transportation for people and goods.

Funded by JICA, the project was scheduled to be completed under five packages between October 2015 and June 2020 at the cost of Tk 2,911.75 crore.

But last year, 21 more bridges were added in the project, extending its duration till June 2022, a project official said. However, the project cost remains same as the construction of one major bridge in Narsingdi was halted, and its budget was repurposed for 21 smaller bridges.

"Now, the 21 bridges would be built under package-6," he said under anonymity.

Of the total 82 bridges, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated 25 in Khulna, Barishal and Gopalganj zones on March 12, which were under package 3, 4 and 5, he said. Work of package 1 and 2 is now undergoing, he added.

12 Nigerians

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with the victim and befriended him through chats over a period of month. The "foreigner" at one stage offered to send him costly gift from abroad and lured him, saying the package would contain million dollar worth of items and asked him to receive the parcel from the customs office at Chattogram Airport, they said.

Then, the Bangladeshi member of the group, Rahat Ara Khanam alias Farzana -- impersonating a customs officer -- called and asked him to deposit Tk 4.5 lakh in several bank accounts for customs clearance of the so-called parcel. Otherwise, legal steps would be taken, she threatened.

He then deposited Tk 3.73 lakh to bank accounts specified by the gang. As the gang then discontinued communication, he realised that he was cheated and made the complaint, said the CID official.

The gang made at least Tk 5 crore in last two months through scams, the CID official said.

Despite law enforcement agencies repeatedly busting such gangs, the country continues to witness similar cybercrimes. On July 2, CID arrested three Nigerians for cheating people on social media. CID officials requested people to inform law enforcers if they receive such strange offers online.

Charges pressed

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and Saiful were earlier arrested and they are now in jail in connection with the case filed with Sutrapur Police Station on September 25 last year. Shahidul, Rashidul, Merajul and Pavel are on the run.

The IO showed Shahidul, Rashidul, Merajul and Pavel fugitive in the charge sheet and appealed to the court to issue arrest warrant against them. Enamul and Rupun were arrested on January 13 at a house in South Keraniganj. They went into hiding after law enforcers launched a crackdown on illegal casinos, bars, spas and graft last year.

The two brothers have 20 houses, 128 flats, 25 kathas of land in the capital, five cars, and Tk 19.11 crore in 91 bank accounts frozen by the Bangladesh Bank, according to the charge sheet.

Shahed

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found involved in issuing fake Covid-19 test reports following a Rab raid at Regent Hospital.

He was arrested from Satkhira on July 15.

THREE ACCUSED IN BASIC BANK EMBEZZLEMENT CASE

Meanwhile, ACC filed another case yesterday against three people for embezzling Tk 9 crore from Basic Bank.

The accused are Titan Apparels' managing director Hasibur Rahman and director Arshia Atik and manager (dismissed) of BASIC Bank Gulshan Branch S Asif Ahmed.

ACC's Assistant Director Mahbubul Alam filed the case with its Integrated District Office in Dhaka.

According to the case statement, the accused collaborated to misappropriate Tk 8.96 crore between 2008-2012.

Around Tk 4,500 crore was siphoned out of the state-run bank between 2009-2013 when Abdul Hye Bacchu chaired its board, found a Bangladesh Bank inquiry.

Yet investigators could not finish probing the 56 cases filed in 2015 over misappropriation of Tk 2,036 crore.

On July 14, 2014, BB sent a report to ACC, detailing how money was embezzled from that bank through fake companies and dubious accounts. Besides, former finance minister AMA Muhiht in parliament on several occasions expressed anger as he could not take steps against all involved in the scams at Basic Bank and another state-run institution, Sonali Bank.

On February 24, 2016, he told the House audit firms appointed by BB and Basic Bank detected involvement of Bacchu in granting irregular loans, adding that 27 bank officials, 56 organisations and eight surveyor firms were involved in the Basic Bank loan scams.

RHD engineers

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an Eid preparatory meeting of top RHD engineers through video conference from his residence in Dhaka.

The minister said apart from the risk of Covid-19 transmission, heavy rain and flood in different parts of the country are challenges during Eid journey.

He also emphasised on keeping exit points of Dhaka city and Tongi-Gazipur, Kaliakoir-Chandra and Nabinagar-Chandra corridors free of traffic jam.

Roads and highways are in better shape this year but highways can be damaged due to the continuous rain, he said, directing RHD engineers to repair those roads immediately.

He also asked them to be more careful about old and risky bridges, as they might be affected by the flood, heavy rain and additional pressure of vehicles during the Eid rush.

RHD Chief Engineer Quazi Shahriar Hossain presided over the meeting.

Germany provides

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commitment to the forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals and their host communities, said Md Mohsin, secretary of disaster management and relief ministry.

He said lifesaving assistance is particularly important now amid the ongoing pandemic and heavy monsoon rain, both of which are posing great risks to vulnerable families.

"As a longstanding partner to the government of Bangladesh and WFP, we are pleased to know that our contribution is helping humanitarian workers in the frontline continue their lifesaving work for some of the most vulnerable people during such trying times," said Peter Fahrenholtz, Germany ambassador to Bangladesh.

The entire population of about 8,59,000 Rohingyas living across the camps in Cox's Bazar relies on WFP for food, said the release.

In addition, WFP provides nutrition and livelihood support to the host communities to improve their long-term food security outlook, it said.

Covid-19 cases

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Pirgachha upazilas. No death was reported in five other upazilas.

Civil Surgeon Dr Hirambo Roy said the number of Covid-19 patients in Rangpur City Corporation areas is higher than rural areas, as the city is more crowded.

Moreover, city residents are not aware enough. Most of them do not use mask and hardly maintain social distancing, he said.

Although the Deputy Commissioner office in Rangpur issued a set of health directives for the authorities of markets and shopping malls in the city to slow down the infection rate, they are not paying proper attention to the guidelines, said locals.

In Rangpur city, people depend on battery-run three-wheelers to commute to their destinations every day. During the pandemic, the city corporation authorities asked the drivers to carry only three passengers. But both the drivers and passengers are violating the rule.

Khandakar Fakhru Anam, convener of Coronaviruses Protection Committee in Rangpur, said nonchalance towards health directives is behind the high infection rate.

Malaysia spares

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does not recognise refugees, has recently turned away boats and detained hundreds of Rohingya, saying it cannot take in more migrants because of a struggling economy as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Alor Setar High Court, in Kedah state, set aside the caning penalty after reviewing the cases against 27 Rohingya men, said Collin Andrew, the refugees' lawyer.

In its review, the court decided caning would be inhumane as the men were refugees and did not have any prior history of crime or violence, Andrew said in a statement.

"Today's decision is laudable as it demonstrates the promotion and protection of human rights by the High Court," he said.

Under Malaysia's Immigration Act, anyone who illegally enters the country can face a 10,000 ringgit (\$2,345) fine, up to five years' jail as well as six strokes of a cane.

In the past, courts have normally opted for caning when accused had committed an act of violence, a repeat offence, or threatened public order, Andrew said.

Several rights groups including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch had urged Malaysia not to cane the refugees.

The court also ordered for six Rohingya teenagers, who had been convicted as adults and sentenced to seven months' jail, to be released to the UN refugee agency UNHCR following the completion of their detention on Monday, Andrew said.

Hundred

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scientific socialism. The slogans and counter-slogans led to clashes.

In the second incident, a crowd armed with sticks and iron rods attacked a procession of the Rab-Siraj group of Chattrra League, who were proceeding towards Shaheed Minar to take oath.

AFRICAN COUNTRIES FAVOURABLY DISPOSED TOWARDS BANGLADESH

Indian External Affairs Minister Swaran Singh says today in Delhi that the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent and sovereign republic has been favourably accepted in the countries of Africa he visited recently.

SOURCES: July 24, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

3 killed

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Two firearms, some bullets and yaba pills were found at the scene, the officer said.

A Rab man was "hurt" during the so-called gunfight, but Rab didn't say whether he got shot.

In Teknaf upazila of Cox's Bazar, Rashidullah, a 27-year-old Rohingya, was killed in a "gunfight" with Rab.

He was the member of a gang of robbers known as "Khalek Group", Rab said.

He lived in a Rohingya camp in Leda, our Cox's Bazar correspondent reports.

Two Rab members were injured during the gunfight in the hilly area of Domsdomia Jahajghat, said Operation Commander Bimol Chandra Karmakar of Rab-15 and gave an account of the gunfight strikingly similar to the one given by the officer in the capital.

In Bogura, police claimed a suspect was killed in a gunfight between two gangs.

Al-Amin Sheikh, 37, was a resident of Sultanganj Para area of the town, reports our correspondent.

Sonaton Chakroborty, additional superintendent of police, said a police team led by himself went to Nishindhara Ckorkorpara area after the incident and found the bullet-hit man.

Police took him to Bogura Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital where doctors pronounced him dead, the ASP said.

Al-Amin was accused in seven cases including for murder, and possession of illegal arms and drugs, and attempted murder.

Police found a firearm, two bullets and three empty shells at the spot, the officer claimed.

Al-Amin was released from jail and on bail before the coronavirus outbreak, said Sonaton.

Unprecedented

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In another statement, the State Department said China has engaged in massive spying and influence operations throughout the United States for years.

Brave cop saves lives

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police would recommend Atik's nomination for a national reward.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Atik, 30, described Monday's events.

One of the rescued boys was Mahadi, 11, son of Atik's colleague constable Zakir Hossain. The others were Rubel, 10, son of Yanus Ali, a farmer, and Shachchha, 10, son of Aynal Haque, a college teacher.

Atik works as a driver of Durgapur police station and lives with his family at a rented house near the police station, which is situated by the Hoja river.

At 10:00 am on Monday, Atik was sleeping after having returned home from night duty.

His wife Sharmin Begum woke him up. In a terrified voice, she told him that the boys had fallen into the river, the water of which had risen recently because of the floods.

The boys, who were playing on a submerged bridge, were swept away many yards away by the strong currents.

"I saw hundreds of people standing on the riverbanks. Some were taking photographs and shooting videos. None were trying to save them," Atik said.

Sharmin gave him a bamboo pole, which she ordinarily uses to hang washed clothes. Taking the pole, he jumped into the river.

"I needed the pole to save the boys, otherwise I would have drowned myself under their weights," he said.

Rescuing Mahadi was easy for him as he was near the shore.

But Rubel and Shachchha were floating away in the middle of the river.

Atik pushed the bamboo pole towards the boys and asked them to grab on to it.

When they got to the pole, Atik swam to them and took them to shore one by one, he said.

"The boys had become weak fighting the river currents. They were hardly able to hold onto the pole. They could have been washed away in minutes," he said.

All the boys are now safe with their parents, he said. Atik said his memory of saving his own brother from drowning 13 years ago helped him take the split-second decisions that proved crucial in saving the boys.

In 2007, his brother Zayed Rahman, who was then four years old, was drowning in a pond at their village home in Pabna's Sujannagar upazila, he said.

"Many villagers were there around the pond then, but none to save my brother," said Atik, then an intermediate student.

"I saw the face of my little brother in the boys and attempted to save them," he said.

"In times of need, there are only humans for other humans. We cannot just ignore them and watch someone die when there is a way to save them," Atik added.

Atik said him not owning a smartphone also helped. "If I had a smartphone, I feel that I could have become one of the spectators of the boys' possible deaths, instead of a rescuer," he said.

Sabrina JKG convener

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documents where it said Sabrina was the JKG chairman. But we found documents where it showed her as the convener," Abdul Baten, additional commissioner of DB, told a press briefing at the DMP Media Centre yesterday.

JKG Health Care, a sister concern of Oval Group, started its journey in 2015 as a non-profit organisation.

An official order issued by Oval Group on June 13 and signed by its CEO Ariful Chaudhury, said Sabrina and three others were no longer a part of the group. The letter stated Sabrina as the chairman of Oval Group.

After her arrest on July 12, the health ministry suspended Sabrina from her post as registrar (cardiac surgery) at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases for holding a position at a private organisation while being a government employee.

One month after the Covid-19 outbreak began the country in March, JKG got the approval from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) on April 6 and started collecting samples for free at their 44 kiosks installed in Dhaka, Narayanganj and other places.

However, the scam surfaced on June 24 after Teigaon police arrested six employees of Oval Group, including the CEO Ariful Chaudhury, over their alleged involvement in issuing fake Covid-19 test reports.

It was found during police investigation that the organisation started collecting samples from homes in exchange for money despite having no trade licence or the permission to do so. The test results of the samples collected from homes were found to be fake, police said.



World Health Organization
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Tidal surges hamper life

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"For about two months, the deluge of tidal water has ruined vegetable fields, fish enclosures and damaged fences. Many houses have collapsed," he said.

Abdul's income, too, has come down from about Tk 600 to Tk 150 per day, as he can hardly drive his van over the dilapidated, flooded road.

Besides, those villagers, who would go to Koyra Sadar frequently to sell fish, no longer do so, after losing their fish enclosures to the water, he said.

People in these six villages including Kathmarchar, Dighirpar, Gazipara, Kashirhathkhol are mostly dependent on fish farming and farm or day labour, he added.

Now most of them left home and took shelter in nearby cyclone centres, dry parts of roads or at relatives' residences.

Annotun Nesa from Kathmarchar is living with her daughter at a relative's abandoned house, after hers got washed away along with two of her goats and half of her eight fowls.

The 35-year-old woman, whose husband left 13 years ago, used to work as a farm labourer.

With the whole village submerged, Annotun is now jobless.

Moiful Begum of Dighirpar village has been living with her family of four in a makeshift shack, made of bamboo and polythene, on a higher ground that belongs to another villager.

Pointing to an inundated area, she said, "I have a house there, which gets submerged in chest-deep water at high tide. Though the water recedes a little during the ebb current, it returns in 12 hours."

Moiful said they used to live in Satkhira

district's Gabura union's Moddho Beel area. But Aila washed away their house in 2009, so they moved to Koyra.

"Look at the irony; we had to leave our current home for the same reason," she said.

Though Salauddin Yusuf of the same village did not have to leave his house on higher grounds, he lost his livelihood to the double trouble of Amphan and the pandemic.

"My three fishing enclosures on 19 bighas of land, where I invested Tk 13 lakh, are now under the Kopotakkho.

"I cultivated 240 maunds of rice this year but I could not even save that because of the waterlogging," he said.

Due to the economic impact of the pandemic, Salauddin also lost his NGO job recently.

Though his house is pucca, it gets flooded during high tide.

Salauddin is always worried about his three-year-old daughter, who does not know swimming. "We try to keep her asleep most of the time during high tides."

According to the Water Development Board, at least 21 spots in about 40km of the 121km embankments that surround Koyra were broken during Amphan. Around 68 villages of four unions were flooded.

Though water slowly receded from most of the villages, some areas in Uttar Bedkashi remained waterlogged.

People of Koyra had faced a similar situation for three years after Aila completely destroyed 60km of the dams on May 25, 2009.

This time too until the embankments are repaired, there's no respite from waterlogging, locals say.

Floodwater inundates

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pressure of bitter current on the river.

"However, water cannot enter through the damaged portion right now as the houses opposite side of it are high. Now, we are dumping GEO bags to another crack created nearby as water can enter through it," he added.

Sirajul Islam, executive engineer of WDB in Tangail, told The Daily Star that cracks were created on several places on the embankment at Gala union after increasing water level of the Pungli river.

"We are dumping necessary GEO bags as emergency measures to protect the embankment," he said.

"The flood situation may deteriorate within the next few days and we are remained vigilance to protect important flood protection embankments in the district," he added.

Ataul Gani, deputy commissioner in Tangail, along with the WDB officials, already visited the embankment. The DC told journalists that necessary measures were taken as the floodwater cannot enter the district town after collapsing the embankment anyhow.

"We have also kept our eyes for 24 hours

on the important embankment in the district as these cannot collapse despite of further deterioration of the flood situation," he added.

In Sirajganj, many new areas have been flooded as the Jamuna river was flowing above the danger level.

Around 3.38 lakh people in six upazilas are still marooned. The victims are fearing further deterioration of the situation.

The river was flowing 61 cm above the danger level at the hard point, said AKM Rafikul Islam, sub divisional engineer of Sirajganj water development board (WDB).

In Munshiganj, ferry services on Shimulia-Kathalbari route were disrupted for last few days due to huge current on the Padma.

Only five ferries operated among 14 yesterday. More than 300 vehicles were waiting for the crossing and passengers are in trouble due to the disruption of ferry services.

The Padma was flowing 75 cm above the danger mark at Bhaggyakul point yesterday. Around 20,000 families in 104 villages are suffering for flood.

Our Tangail and Pabna correspondents contributed to this report.



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Based on Islamic Shari'ah

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