

AMAZON FIRES A 'LIE'

Says Brazil's President Bolsonaro though govt data show 6,803 active fires raging in there

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BANGLADESH
UPDATE



2,995

New cases in 24hrs



2,66,498

Total cases



3,513

Deaths



1,53,089

Recoveries

GLOBAL
UPDATE



747,791

Deaths



20,607,532

Total cases

Bills cleared but no trace of work

TIB study on block allocations for MPs finds about 26 schemes, says two-thirds of schemes on rural infrastructure are substandard

STAR REPORT

The block allocation of hundreds of crores of taka made to lawmakers for implementing Important Rural Infrastructure Development Project (IRIDP) failed to yield the desired benefit due to political influence, nepotism, extortion and the lack of a specific legal framework and monitoring, says a TIB report published yesterday.

Work quality of about two-thirds of the schemes to build rural roads, construct bridges and culverts under IRIDP was not satisfactory, said the report which focused on the allocation of block funds for the last 15 years.

Staggeringly, researchers could not find any existence of 26 schemes, although final bills for those were withdrawn.

The report also said MPs have not taken on any schemes on three other objectives of the project, like increasing production of agricultural and non-agricultural products, their marketing facilities and accelerating rural employment.

Lawmakers are keener on taking up schemes that are only related to

- Two-thirds of schemes on building roads and bridges, culverts
- Estimated financial corruption around Tk 27.20 crore to 41.73 crore
- "Commission money" hovered from Tk 15 lakh to Tk 40 lakh in each constituency
- Quality of 33 percent schemes was "not good", 30 percent "not good, not bad"

development of the rural road system, construction of bridges and culverts and development of growth centres and hat bazaars, all of which give them more scope for corruption and making money, experts said.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) also estimated that financial corruption among various stakeholders during different stages of tender, withdrawal of final bill and security deposit, amounted to around Tk 27.20 crore to 41.73 crore.

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Left unused for a few months, rickshaw vans used to carry children to and from school are being claimed by the might of nature as the schools remain closed. This also means that many of the pullers have lost their means of living. The photo was taken at South para in the capital's Mohakhali yesterday.

PHOTO:
RASHED SHUMON

SP of Rajshahi range sued for extortion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Belayet Hossain, superintendent of police of Rajshahi range, was sued yesterday for extortion in a case filed in Dhaka.

Golam Mostofa, a businessman and a relative of a former inspector general of police, filed the case with the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Didar Hussain around noon yesterday. Some 15 to 16 unnamed people were also accused in the case.

The case document states that around two years ago, the complainant was introduced to Belayet Hossain in the office of the former IGP. "A good relation developed between them. Belayet took a loan of Tk 5 lakh from the complainant's father Golam Mohammad on August 11 last year to register a piece of land. He repaid the money through a cheque on March 15.

"On April 4 this year, Belayet sent a man to the complainant's father. The man introduced himself as a DB officer. Belayet then called the complainant's father and said that his son would be in trouble if he did not pay Tk 5 lakh. Later, the complainant's father handed over a cheque of Tk 5 lakh to Belayet. On April 10, his father spoke to the complainant.

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Liaquat shot an unarmed Sinha

Sefat narrates the murder to a private TV channel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Right after Maj (ret'd) Sinha and Sefat revealed their identities, Inspector Liaquat ran in front of their car and put a barrel in front of it.

"Stepping out of the car, I started walking towards the rear of it. He [Sinha] also got down. I heard him saying, "Calm down, calm down"... Moments later, I heard the gunshots... I saw Sinha lying on the ground," Shahadul Islam Sefat, who was accompanying Sinha, told in a TV interview yesterday.

In another development, a Cox's Bazar court yesterday placed seven people, including four policemen, each on a seven-day remand in a case filed over the killing of Major (ret'd) Sinha Md Rashed Khan.

Sefat who was accused in two cases -- murder and narcotics -- filed by police following the killing, was released on bail on Monday.

"We had the camera tripod but no one could recognise it as a tripod at the time. We had no firearms while we got down from the hill."

"When we arrived at the check post, the on-duty police officials told us, 'Ok you may go'.... Then he [Liaquat] came towards us when we started pulling up the windows [of the car] and he said, 'Wait, Say it again [our identities]'

"When we revealed our identities, he placed a drum on the road before our car..."

Moments later he heard gunshots and saw Sinha lying on the ground.

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Decision on trial of China vaccine likely next week

Health minister to discuss it with PM; 42 die, 2,995 infected in a day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The decision on running a trial of a Chinese Covid-19 vaccine in the country may come next week, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said yesterday.

He said he would sit with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina next week to make a decision in this regard, a Cabinet Division official told The Daily Star, quoting the minister as saying.

The health minister was talking to Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal during an informal discussion after a meeting of the cabinet purchase committee. Zahid said the discussion would be on the contract with the Chinese company Sinovac, pricing, advance payment and some other issues regarding the vaccine trial.

The finance minister told the health minister, "You decide what you would do and send a proposal to us. We will release funds."

On July 18, Bangladesh Medical Research Council permitted the icddr;b

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Hazardous cargo lying at Ctg port

The unclaimed goods pose risk of fire, accidents

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Ctg

Various types of imported hazardous cargo, including chemical and other inflammable goods, have been lying around at the designated shed and yards of Chattogram Port for years -- posing the threat of fires and other accidents.

These unclaimed goods, imported between one to 28 years ago, haven't been auctioned off timely or destroyed by the customs authorities -- meaning the country's premier seaport is at risk of a deadly explosion like in Beirut port in Lebanon last week.

Though there have been no significant steps taken over the years regarding removal of these hazardous goods from the port, in the last few days, the Chattogram Port Authority (CPA) has actively begun looking into the handling of these cargoes in order to avert such an incident.

In the latest move, on Sunday, CPA formed a six-member committee headed by its member (harbour and marine), Commodore Shafiq Bari, to assess the current condition of hazardous cargoes in the P-shed of the port.

Out of the 14 sheds in the port, P-shed is designated for storing dangerous and hazardous goods detected as per the International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code.

Usually, two categories of extremely hazardous goods are delivered from the port immediately after import. Other categories of hazardous goods are kept at the P-shed, from where those are then delivered. Additionally, containers carrying hazardous goods are also kept at the container yards.

According to CPA data, various types of chemical and hazardous goods -- which were imported between 1992 and 2019 -- are currently kept in around 55 pallets, 13 drums, and around 900 packages. The number of hazardous goods containers could not be found.

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GRAFT ALLEGATIONS ACC quizzes former DG of DGHS for over 4 hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday questioned former director general of Directorate General of Health Services Prof Dr Abul Kalam Azad for about four and a half hours over corruption allegations.

A team led by ACC Director Mir Md Zainul Abedin Shebly grilled Azad at its Segunbagicha headquarters.

The ACC also quizzed former DGHS director Dr Aminul Hasan and two others, confirmed Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya, the anti-graft body's public relations officer.

"Our officers gleaned information. But for the sake of proper enquiry, we cannot disclose it at this moment," he said.

Prof Azad will also be quizzed today.

On August 6, the ACC summoned Azad and four others.

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Seven-year-old Esha, who needs an open heart surgery, plays with a smartphone while waiting for her turn to give samples for a coronavirus test at Mugda General Hospital. Even though her parents reached the hospital around 6:00am, they were still waiting in the queue around 10:00am when the photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO:
SK ENAMUL HAQ

CORONAVIRUS FALLOUT

70pc returnees remain jobless

Says IOM survey on Bangladeshi migrants back home in February-June this year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 70 percent of the migrant workers who returned from abroad between February and June this year are unemployed, according to a study of International Organisation for Migration.

The study findings, based on interviews with 1,486 such migrants, were released in a report titled "Rapid Assessment of Needs and Vulnerabilities of Internal and International Return Migrants in Bangladesh".

The report was released in coordination with the government, said an IOM release sent to the media yesterday.

The survey was conducted in May and July in 12 districts from where many migrate to foreign lands to work. The survey also interviewed 1,279 internal migrants.

According to the report, the returnees experienced reintegration challenges, including difficulties in securing employment, financial problems, and health-related issues.

"Unplanned, large-scale returns of unemployed migrant workers affect remittance-dependent communities across the country where each migrant worker supports three members of his or her household on average," said the IOM.

Migrant workers are particularly vulnerable to the impact of the Covid-19 crisis, it said.

Since March this year, hundreds of thousands of migrants were compelled to return home due to limited

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