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BANGABANDHU RAILWAY BRIDGE

# Construction finally begins

*Raises hope for faster rail travel after Dec 2025*

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Construction work of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Railway Bridge over the Jamuna river has finally started, more than three and a half years after the government approved the project.

Although the contractors began the preliminary work last month, the fully-fledged work is yet to start as they could not mobilise their manpower from Japan due to the pandemic, said officials.

Local staffers of the contractors are now preparing the construction site, fencing the site and building accommodation facilities for workers. Meanwhile, a land-related dispute with the Bangladesh Bridge Authority for building a construction yard has also been settled, they said.

The project costs have gone up to Tk 16,781 crore from Tk 9,734 crore and the current deadline is December 2025. In March 3 this year, the project cost was revised, and its duration extended by two years from 2023.

The 4.8km-long bridge will be built some 300 metres upstream of the Bangabandhu bridge, which has a single rail line.

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

The bridge would improve the capacity of Bangladesh Railway in operating more trains between the capital and western part of the country. It would also help reduce train delays, which are now common, officials said.

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Heritage sites and museums across the country had been closed since the Covid-19 outbreak began in March. The department of archeology has decided to open the spots to the public on a limited scale from today, with the condition that visitors follow health safety guidelines. The photo was taken recently at the Behular Basar Ghor in Bogura.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

## BSF-BGB MEET Rescheduled talks begin tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The director general-level talks between the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and the Indian Border Security Force (BSF), which were postponed earlier as the BSF delegation failed to reach Dhaka, will now take place between tomorrow and September 19.

The formal meeting will start at 10:45am tomorrow at the BGB's Palkhna Headquarters, said a BGB press release.

Major General Md Shafeenul Islam, DG of the BGB, will lead the 13-member Bangladeshi delegation, which will include top officials from the BGB and officials from prime minister's office, home and foreign ministries, joint river commission and Land Record and Survey Department.

Rakesh Asthana, DG of the BSF, will lead a six-member delegation, which will include high officials and India's home and

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## FUTURE OF ROHINGYAS They must be included in decision making

*Says Amnesty International*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh must be given the right to participate in decisions affecting their lives and speak for themselves, Amnesty International said yesterday.

In a news briefing, the global rights watchdog has also called for a full and thorough investigation into allegations that Rohingya refugees have been subjected to extrajudicial executions.

The briefing titled "Let us speak for our rights" outlined how exclusion from decision-making was impacting the human rights of Rohingya refugees from freedom of expression, assembly and movement to access to healthcare and education.

"For decades, the Rohingya were subjected to persecution and discrimination in Myanmar, with hundreds of thousands forced to flee their homes because of crimes against humanity committed against them. Now, three years since their displacement, they are still suffering and prevented from speaking up for their rights," said David Griffiths,

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### FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

## Busy day for Bangabandhu



New Zealand High Commissioner Rex Cunningham talking to Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on September 16, 1972.

September 16, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

### TAJUDDIN CALLS ON BANGABANDHU

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman spends a busy day at Gono Bhavan today. He arrives at the Gono Bhavan at about 10:00am in the morning and stays till 8:00pm. The prime minister looks into files and also has talks with his cabinet colleagues.

Finance Minister Tajuddin Ahmed discusses his brief for the Commonwealth Finance Ministers Conference and the meeting of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund with the prime

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### THREATS TO PRISONS

## Caller might have used VoIP to mask identity

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The anonymous caller, who had threatened jail authorities of "snatching away militant inmates from jails", might have used a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) to make the call, police suspect.

"We got a cell phone number of the caller but we are suspecting that it is not the actual number and the caller might have used VoIP," a police high-up, involved with the investigation of the call, told The Daily Star yesterday.

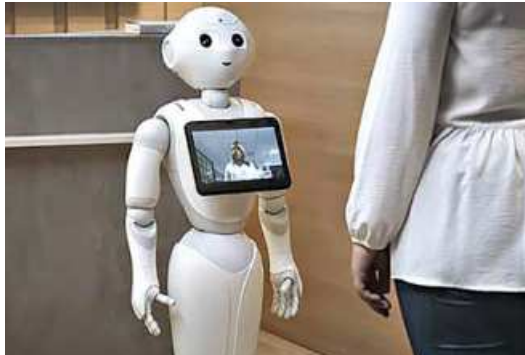
On September 12, Lalmonirhat's jail superintendent and district commissioner received a call from an anonymous person, who threatened to take away militant inmates from the jails.

Before the threat, the jail

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## Covid robocop

### Humanoid reminds office workers to wear masks



MAIL ONLINE

Japanese tech company SoftBank has created a version of its Pepper robot that can detect whether office workers are wearing a mask to guard against Covid-19.

The 47-inch-high robot with human-like features is already in operation in some countries welcoming visitors to shops, exhibitions and other public spaces.

But the upgraded version is designed to stand at the entrance to offices, conferences, airports and other public spaces, to provide a gentle reminder to people to wear masks.

Pepper uses enhanced AI face detection to scan

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## 43 more die from Covid-19 in 24 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Forty-three Covid-19 deaths were reported in the past 24 hours, raising the total number of reported casualties due to the virus to 4,802, said the health directorate yesterday.

The death rate, in terms of all confirmed cases so far, stands at 1.41 percent.

With 1,724 people newly testing positive for the viral infection in 24 hours till 8:30am yesterday, the positivity rate stands at 12.27 percent against a total of 14,050 samples tested,

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### PRAYER TIMING SEPTEMBER 16

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4:35 12:45 4:30 6:14 7:45  
JAMAAT 5:10 1:15 4:45 6:17 8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## Cop held for raping minor in CHT

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,  
Khagrachhari

A police constable of Ataltila police camp of Khagrachhari's Dighinala upazila was arrested on charges of raping a 12-year-old schoolgirl on Monday evening.

The alleged rapist was identified as Nazmul Hasan, 23, according to the case statement, which was filed by the girl's father with Dighinala police station on Monday night.

"Police member Nazmul was sent to jail after he was produced before the court," said Md Mehedy Hasan, assistant superintendent of police of Khagrachhari circle, yesterday.

The victim is from the Chakma community and a student of class six at a local government school. Her family home is near the police camp area.

The incident happened on Monday evening, at around 5:40pm, in the vicinity of the camp, according to the case statement.

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A billboard being torn down in front of the Gulshan-2 Nagar Bhaban as DNCC yesterday began its drive against illegal billboards and signboards in areas under its jurisdiction. At least 150 such structures in Gulshan 2 and 100 in Banani road 11 were also removed the same day. Several companies who have illegally occupied roads or sidewalks with billboards and signboards were also fined Tk 60,000.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

# Vaccine may be ready in November

*Says official of China's CDC; S Korea to secure Covid vaccines for 60pc of population*

AGENCIES

Coronavirus vaccines being developed in China may be ready for use by the general public as early as November, an official with the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said.

China has four Covid-19 vaccines in the final stage of clinical trials. At least three of those have already been offered to essential workers under an emergency use programme launched in July.

Phase 3 clinical trials were proceeding smoothly and the vaccines could be ready for the general public in November or December, CDC chief biosafety expert Guizhen Wu said in an interview with state TV late on Monday.

Wu, who said she has experienced no abnormal symptoms in recent months after taking an experimental vaccine herself in April, did not specify which vaccines she was referring to.

A unit of state pharmaceutical giant China National Pharmaceutical Group (Sinopharm) and US-listed Sinovac Biotech are developing the three vaccines under the state's emergency use programme. A fourth Covid-19 vaccine being developed by CanSino Biologics was approved for use by the Chinese military in June.

Sinopharm said in July that its vaccine could be ready

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