



OUTBOUND REMITTANCE
Billions of dollars sent abroad, but there is no reliable data on it
STORY ON B1

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Gone are the hills

Dohazari-Cox's Bazar rail track project leads to destruction of nature

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Chattogram

The village is named after its highest hill, Rangapahar, but the natural landmark no longer exists.

Located under Chunoti union in the district's Lohagara upazila, it has lost all of its hills in just two years since 2018 when the construction of the Dohazari-Cox's Bazar railway track began.

The hills were razed to make way for the 120km track, which is being built under a fast-track project of the government.

A number of hills and hillocks in the upazila have also been flattened by locals under contract with Toma Construction and Company Limited for supplying earth to the rail line project.

During a visit on October 14, this correspondent saw that a roughly one-kilometre road was built filling up a piece of arable land and a canal in Rangapahar village to facilitate the transportation of earth.

The entrance to the road was blocked with a makeshift gate of corrugated sheets. This correspondent managed to pass through it with the help of a local and reach a spot of hill cutting.

"There was a big hill over there," said Abu Shahed, a villager, pointing

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22 million cubic feet of hills razed at Rangapahar village of Chunoti union

Arable land and canal filled up to build provisional road to carry earth from Chunoti hills

Perpetrators are taking advantage of DoE negligence

The rail track construction will need about eight crore cubic feet of earth

Government permitted 120 acres of hill cutting in at 15 spots



A couple of structures on what remains of a hill in Rangapahar village of Chattogram's Lohagara upazila. Dozens of such hills have been flattened in the village for the construction of Dohazari-Cox's Bazar railway link. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA YOUSUF



Run dope tests on drivers

PM directs authorities

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the authorities concerned to bring drivers under a dope testing system to know whether they abuse drugs.

"We need to know whether those who are driving [vehicles] use drugs. They need to undergo dope testing. This testing is absolutely essential for each drivers. You have to do this," she said while addressing a discussion through a video conference from the Gono Bhaban.

The road transport and bridges ministry organised the event at the auditorium

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THE THIRD VIEW

Why do our protesters get beaten up?
'Development' must also be of values



MAHFUZZ ANAM

"Next year, we will celebrate the fifty years of our independence. Are we going to enter it with this medieval attitude towards dissent?"

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\$597m pledged for Rohingyas

Donors aim to meet \$1b target in funding for the refugees in 2020, urge Myanmar to create conditions for their return

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The international community yesterday pledged \$597 million in humanitarian assistance for Rohingyas in the region and urged Myanmar to create conditions for their repatriation.

The US, EU, and UK, announced \$200 million, €96 million and £37 million.

The announcement came at a donors' conference for the Rohingyas co-hosted by the US, UK, EU and UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

This year, Bangladesh received less than 50 percent of the \$1 billion required for the Rohingya refugees.

Delegates from 50 countries, including Bangladesh and several ASEAN states, attended the virtual conference.

"In the initial joint response plan for Bangladesh, the budget was \$877 million. But the COVID-19 pandemic required additional funding. Therefore, the budget went up to about \$1 billion," a UN official told The Daily Star.

Reading out a joint statement from the co-hosts of the conference, Filippo Grandi, UN high commissioner for the refugees, said when the international community continues efforts to secure long term solution, their focus now is on sustainable response planning so that Bangladesh could more effectively support the management of the response to maximise the benefits of both Bangladeshi and Rohingya communities.

"The crisis is affecting the wider region. Rohingyas, especially women

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WATER TRANSPORT

Strike lifted, workers get back to work

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The indefinite work abstention announced by water transport workers was withdrawn yesterday evening after a meeting at the labour ministry in Dhaka.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) Chairman Commodore Golam Sadek said as the water transport owners agreed to pay their workers food allowances, the latter withdrew their programme.

The food allowances are fixed in three slabs -- Tk 1,000, Tk 1,200 and Tk 1,500, he said.

State Minister for labour and employment Begum Monnujan Sufian chaired the meeting at her office where representatives of water transport owners and workers' associations, Shipping Ministry Secretary Mezbah Uddin Chowdhury, Director General (DG) of Department of Shipping Commodore Abu Jafar Md Jalal Uddin were present.

However, a majority of water transport workers in Chattogram did not resume work initially as the announcement of

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In view of the virtual absence of all opposition political activities due to Covid-19, we have decided to run a series of interviews of political party leaders who are not in the government-led alliance. The interviews will highlight their assessment of the overall situation of the country, discuss their own party's activities and the plans they have for the future. We hope our readers will find the interviews informative and helpful in moving towards the future. We start with Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, secretary general of the biggest opposition party BNP, to be followed by GM Quader, chairman of Jatiya Party. -Editor

There's no room for proper politics

Says Fakhrul, blames it on govt

Following is an excerpt of the interview taken by The Daily Star's Golam Mortoza:

The Daily Star (DS): BNP is a large political party. Is it facing a kind of a crisis now?

Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir: The BNP is the largest political party in the country. Its leadership has always been very strong. Certainly, there is a crisis right now. Party Chairperson Khaleda Zia has been convicted in false cases. She was jailed for two years. As per the party charter, Senior



Now, we are facing the government's repression. More than one lakh cases have been filed and more than 35 lakh party

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Wrapping themselves up in a plastic cover, a mother and her child take shelter from the rain on a pavement in the capital's Banglamotor area. *Inset*, a rickshaw-puller waits for passengers in the same area. An afternoon rain, induced by depression in the Bay, caused people, especially the homeless, to suffer badly yesterday.

DEPRESSION IN BAY

Rain forecast for next 48 hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Heavy rains, induced by a depression formed in the Bay of Bengal, disrupted regular life of people across the country yesterday.

Rains started at noon and continued till evening in phases and would be continued for next 48 hours due to the depression.

"There will be rainfall across the country for at least next 48 hours," said Shamsuddin Ahmed, director of the Met office, yesterday evening.

The depression formed in the Bay will be intensified and might cause heavy rainfall in Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barishal, Chattogram, Mymensingh and Sylhet divisions in the next 48 hours, the Met office said.

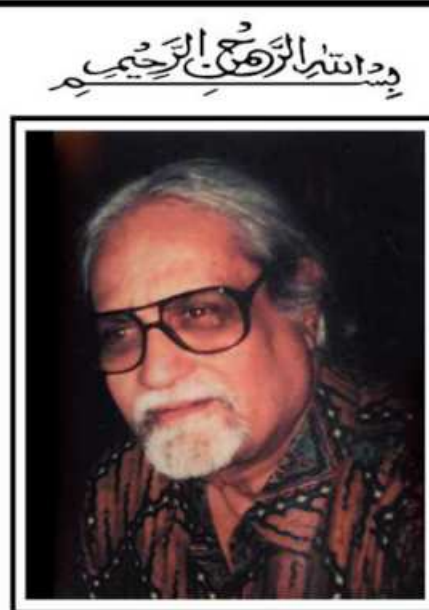
The depression lies over north-west and adjoining west-central Bay.

According to a weather forecast published on the official website of Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), warning signal no-3 was hoisted at the seaports of Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Mongla and Payra.

All fishing trawlers and

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

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Azimur Rahman
1935 - 2001

Peace, My Heart
by Rabindranath Tagore

Peace, my heart, let the time for the parting be sweet.
Let it not be a death but completeness.
Let love melt into memory and pain into songs.
Let the flight through the sky end in the folding of the wings over the nest.
Let the last touch of your hands be gentle like the flower of the night.
Stand still, O Beautiful End, for a moment, and say your last words in silence.
I bow to you and hold up my lamp to light you on your way.