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"I am proud to announce today the first senior White House communications team comprised entirely of women."
US PRESIDENT-ELECT JOE BIDEN ON NAMING ALL-FEMALE SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS TEAM



"I think getting out for 20-30 runs is a crime, especially in T20s."
BARISHAL CAPTAIN TAMIM IQBAL AFTER LOSING THE BANGABANDHU T20 CUP MATCH AGAINST CHATTOGRAM



"We may see a surge upon a surge. We don't want to frighten people, but that's the reality."
TOP US SCIENTIST ANTHONY FAUCI WARNS OF RISE IN COVID CASES IN COMING WEEKS

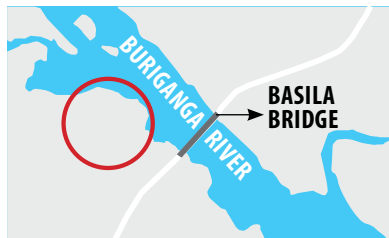


Part of river now MP's

Lawmaker Aslamul filled up over 54 acres of Buriganga, wetland for power plant, pvt economic zone, govt probe finds

PINAKI ROY

A ruling party MP has filled up more than 54 acres from the Buriganga river and wetland to construct a power plant and a private economic zone in Basila, according to a government probe report.



Aslamul Haque, lawmaker of Dhaka-14, started this illegal activity in 2010, found the probe led by the National River Conservation Commission (NRCC).

The report recommended the land be recovered and restored to its original state as nearly 14km of the river is dying due to this earth filling.

Out of that 54 acres, at least 12.78 acres was part of the Buriganga, according to the oldest land record available, known as the Cadastral Survey (CS) record map. This survey ended in 1940.

This river land was illegally recorded as a private property in the Revisional Survey, which ended in 1962, says the NRCC report.

The rest of the 54 acres was wetland along the river and marked as flood-flow zone in the detailed area plan (DAP) of Dhaka city. The characteristics of the flood-flow zone cannot be changed without permission as per the Bangladesh Water Act-2013.

The lawmaker filled up the wetland illegally and constructed a power plant and factories there, creating obstacles to the water flow, which is a clear violation of the Water Act, the probe found.

NRCC prepared the report in line with the 2009 High Court verdict that directed the government to measure the river areas based on the CS record.

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Not maintaining physical distancing, people crowd in front of booths set up at an NBR field office in the capital's Paltana area to submit their income tax returns. Officially, yesterday was the last day for income tax return submission, but the National Board of Revenue extended the deadline till December 31 taking public suffering caused by the pandemic into consideration. This photo was taken around 3:00pm yesterday before the tax authorities announced that the deadline was extended by a month.

Taxpayers get one more month to file returns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Board of Revenue yesterday extended the deadline for income tax return submission by one month to December 31, taking public sufferings caused by the pandemic into consideration.

The move came a day after the tax administration showed its reluctance to grant individual taxpayers additional time to submit the returns for the year 2020-21.

Officially, the last day for tax return submission is November 30 -- termed Tax Day -- and the tax authorities extended the deadline based on the power given in the relevant law for factors like pandemic.

"We have seen that many taxpayers will face difficulties if we don't extend the time. Even today, there were huge crowds of taxpayers wanting to file their tax returns," NBR Chairman

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Country to join 3rd submarine cable

The project to cost Tk 693cr; proposal goes to Ecnec meet today

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Bangladesh is going to be connected with a third submarine cable to meet the rapidly growing demand for internet bandwidth and ensure uninterrupted broadband internet services.

It will need to spend Tk 693 crore to get linked with the third submarine cable. Of the amount, Tk 392 crore will come from government funds and the rest from Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company Ltd (BSCL), planning ministry officials told The Daily Star.

The Posts and Telecommunications Division is expected to place the project proposal at the weekly meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnec) today for approval, they said.

The project, aimed at expanding the international telecommunications system in the country, will be implemented by June 2024, the officials mentioned.

Under the project, Bangladesh will be connected with the undersea cable SEA-ME-WE 6 (South East Asia-Middle East-Western Europe), an optical fibre submarine communications cable system, officials said.

The country will have to set up 13,275 km core submarine cable network and 1,850 km branch submarine cable network.

Bangladesh got connected with its first undersea cable, SEA-ME-WE 4, in 2006 and with the second one, SEA-ME-WE 5, in 2017.

In the early 1990s, Bangladesh had rejected a proposal for free connection with the SEA-ME-WE 3.

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2,525 cases in 24hrs, highest in 3 months

35 more deaths from Covid-19

MOUDDUD AHMED SUJAN

The country yesterday reported 2,525 new cases of Covid-19 -- the highest for a single day in nearly three months.

Besides, 35 people died from Covid-19 in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, according to a DGHS press release.

On September 2, 2,582 people were reported coronavirus positive. After that, the numbers of new cases and deaths continued to decrease until early last month.

Covid-19 cases rose by 33.49 percent last month compared to the number recorded in October.

During the first 30 days of October, the Directorate General of Health Services reported 42,885 confirmed cases, while the 30 days of November saw a higher figure of confirmed cases -- 57,248.

Experts apprehended that numbers of both the infections and deaths may go up this month.

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COVID-19 VACCINES

First 3cr doses to be given for free

Govt may double fine for not wearing mask

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will initially distribute three crore doses of Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine to people for free.

"People will get the vaccine for free. The government is paying the money," Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam told a press briefing at the secretariat after the weekly cabinet meeting yesterday.

A proposal to buy the vaccine from Serum Institute of India has been sent by the health ministry to the cabinet committee on economic affairs for approval. The committee will sit tomorrow to discuss the matter.

"Approval from the Economic Affairs Committee is required as per section 76 of PPR since it will be bought from a single source," he said.

On November 5, the government signed a trilateral MoU with the Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) and Bangladesh's Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd for buying three crore doses of the vaccine.

The finance ministry on November 16 initially allocated some Tk 735.77 crore for the Health Service Division to procure the Covid-19 vaccine.

Speaking about the vaccine distribution policy at the briefing, the cabinet secretary yesterday said there is a guideline of the World Health Organization in this regard.

"A programme is being developed on who will get the vaccine first," Anwarul said, adding that frontline workers, police, and people in the

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USA may see 'surge upon surge' of virus

Moderna files for vaccine approval

AGENCIES

America should prepare for a "surge upon a surge" in coronavirus cases as millions of travelers return home after the Thanksgiving holiday, top US scientist Anthony Fauci warned Sunday.

The United States is the world's worst-affected country, with 266,831 Covid-19 deaths, and President Donald Trump's administration has issued conflicting messages on mask-wearing, travel and the danger posed by the virus.

"There almost certainly is going to be an uptick because of what has happened with the travel," Fauci told CNN's "State of the Union."

Travel surrounding Thursday's Thanksgiving holiday made this the busiest week in US airports since the pandemic began.

"We may see a surge upon a surge" in two or three weeks, Fauci added. "We don't want to frighten people, but that's the reality."

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Modi refuses to back down on farm reforms

REUTERS, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday resisted calls for the repeal of farm reforms that have ignited the biggest protests by farmers in years around the national capital, saying they were being misled and that deregulation would benefit them.

Thousands of people from the big farming state of Punjab were camped out on the outskirts of Delhi for a fifth day demanding that they be allowed to stage protests in the city centre against the new laws that open up India's tightly regulated farm produce market.

Farmers who could earlier sell grains and other products only at neighbouring government-regulated wholesale markets can now sell them across the country, including to big food processing companies and retailers such as Walmart.

But farm groups and opposition parties say the government will eventually abolish the

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Carrying homemade food in a basket over her head, a woman walks off a boat in Shoari Ghat area of the capital. A group of such women in Kamrangirchar prepares lunch items, including rice, vegetables, fish and chicken, in their homes and sell them to shop owners and employees at different markets in Chawkbazar, Labagh and Shoari Ghat areas on the other side of the Buriganga river. They sell each meal for Tk 40 to Tk 50. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

A grim tale of disease, distress

HIV-positive sex workers fight for life, livelihood

NILIMA JAHAN

"Apa, are you sure you will not write my name in your report? If anyone could understand that I am [HIV] positive, I will not find clients anymore and will die of hunger," said 38-year-old Ruma (not her real name), an HIV positive sex-worker while speaking to this newspaper yesterday.

Ruma has been living on the streets, mostly in the Gulistan area of the capital, since she was 12, around when she came into notice of a man who was involved in sex trade.

Soon she found herself dealing with no less than 20 clients a night. At a young age, she also learned to inject drugs into her system after seeing others do it.

Although she would prefer using condoms to avoid sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), most of the clients would demand unsafe sex for which they would pay an extra amount. "I could not say no sometimes," she said.

Ruma came to know she was HIV positive in 2017, after screenings at a drop-in-centre (DIC), run by a local NGO, for those who inject drugs.

Even today, Ruma depends on sex trade for a living. She hides her HIV status and insists on using condoms so that her clients do not get infected by her.

"Nowadays I can only work twice or thrice a week for my expenses. From a single client, I get around Tk 100 and with that, I buy whatever I need. My husband doesn't always live with me and I don't get much support from him."

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