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The 1.12-km long and 17.9-metre wide Mohakhali flyover, the first of its kind in the country built at a cost of Tk 114 crore, opens to traffic in the capital tomorrow, three days before schedule amid a raging controversy over safety issues.

MONGA IN THE NORTH

Starving people ferret out food

RAFIQ HASAN and RAFIQUE SARKER, from Rangpur

It was an unprecedented scene at Moubhashi village along the river Teesta in Gangachhara Upazila of Rangpur yesterday noon, as several hundred monga-stricken people rushed out of their houses to these correspondents just to list their names for assistance.

There was no way one could convince them that the correspondents were not there to make any list for relief or any sort of assistance. They were shouting and pleading to get themselves included on the 'list'.

"Please, write down my name, I did not get any sort of assistance. I am facing hardship and cannot feed my children," said Roksana of Moubhashi village.

Roksana, a mother of three, said none of her children had food in the

morning. Her day-labourer husband has been without money as there is hardly any job during this off-season, known locally as Monga or near-famine.

Similar stories were also told by many others in Moubhashi and nearby villages, some 25 kilometres from Rangpur town. They said they did not get any relief from the government or any other organisations. Many of them alleged that the local administration barred army personnel from visiting the villages.

The villages remained submerged during the recent floods for more than three months, prompting people to take shelter in the nearby schools and colleges. They came back home just a few weeks back, but things have turned to be worse for them.

The floods damaged standing crops in the area and took a heavy

toll on other income-generating activities like fisheries, poultry and dairy farms. The villagers are now waiting for work during harvest, which is around two weeks away.

As the correspondents were leaving the village by a boat, some of the women rushed up to the ghat, pulled the boat behind and declined to let go of them without getting their names listed. They secured their release giving assurance that their names would be listed and they would get assistance soon.

The villagers said that many people living along Teesta do not have three meals a day and that most of them are surviving on one or two meals a day. Many prefer fasting during Ramadan to starving all day long.

"I have around two acres of land but despite that I cannot arrange three meals a day," said Zakaria of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Mohakhali flyover opens tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Mohakhali flyover in the capital, first ever of its kind in the country, will be opened for traffic tomorrow.

The decision to open the WB-funded flyover was finalised after conflict between the World Bank (WB) and the communications ministry over the opening of the flyover before installation of all the shock transmission units (STUs) was solved at the eleventh hour.

On October 26 Guang Z. Chen, Sector Manager, Transport, of South Asian Region of WB issued a letter to Shahabuddin, project director of the Roads and Highways department informing that the supervision consultant refused to take responsibility for safety of the flyover and traffic on it.

The contractual requirements which include full testing and installation of the STUs, can not be completed by November 4, the letter said.

The letter also said opening of the flyover could risk public safety and cause damage to the structural integrity of the flyover.

Asked about the WB's concern,

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Ctg magnate Jamal killed, says suspect

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Kidnapped Chittagong magnate Jamal Uddin Chowdhury has been killed by listed criminal Osman, chief of notorious Osman Bahini, disclosed another criminal Kala Mahub who was arrested by the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on Monday.

Information given by Kala Mahub has lent a new dimension to the investigation of the sensational abduction case as the family members of Jamal earlier claimed that he (Jamal) was still alive and the abductors were holding him hostage.

Mahub, a close aide of Kasem chairman of Patikchhari, the prime accused in the Jamal Uddin abduction case, was arrested at Kanchannagar of Patikchhari on

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Mob lynches 4 'robbers', wounds 3 in Hazaribagh

1 hurt as criminals fire on locals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A lynch mob yesterday killed four alleged robbers and critically wounded three others at Char Wazpur in Hazaribagh of the capital.

The lynched robbers aged between 24 and 32 are 'Dhola' Ripon of Wazpur and 'Kala' Ripon, Johnny and Jewell of Mohammadpur and Mirpur areas. Abdus Salam, 42, a worker of Mina Bhaban at Ramchandrapur in Mohammadpur, suffered wounds when the fleeing robbers fired on the locals.

A gang of seven, wearing black mask, introduced themselves as

members of anticrime forces Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and Chetah and knocked the door of Muktar Hossain at around 6:15am. They told him that they had come to search the house in connection with a case, said Muktar's uncle Monir Hossain.

"As I opened the door, the robbers entered the two-storey building that houses four families and took the keys of almirahs after holding all of us hostage at gunpoint," Monir said.

They took land documents and a VCD player, raising suspicion among the inmates that they were rather robbers than Rab men.

During the 30-minute raid, the robbers took Tk 23 lakh in cash, of which Tk 20 lakh got by selling some pieces of land to Mohammadia Housing recently to send co-owner Shamsul Haq to Bangkok for treatment, and 100 tolas of gold ornaments. They also beat up the inmates.

The robbers attempted to slip away by a mechanised boat on which they came to Char Wazpur from Gudaraghat at Mohammadpur.

"As the boat was on the mid-river, it struck a piece of bamboo and

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

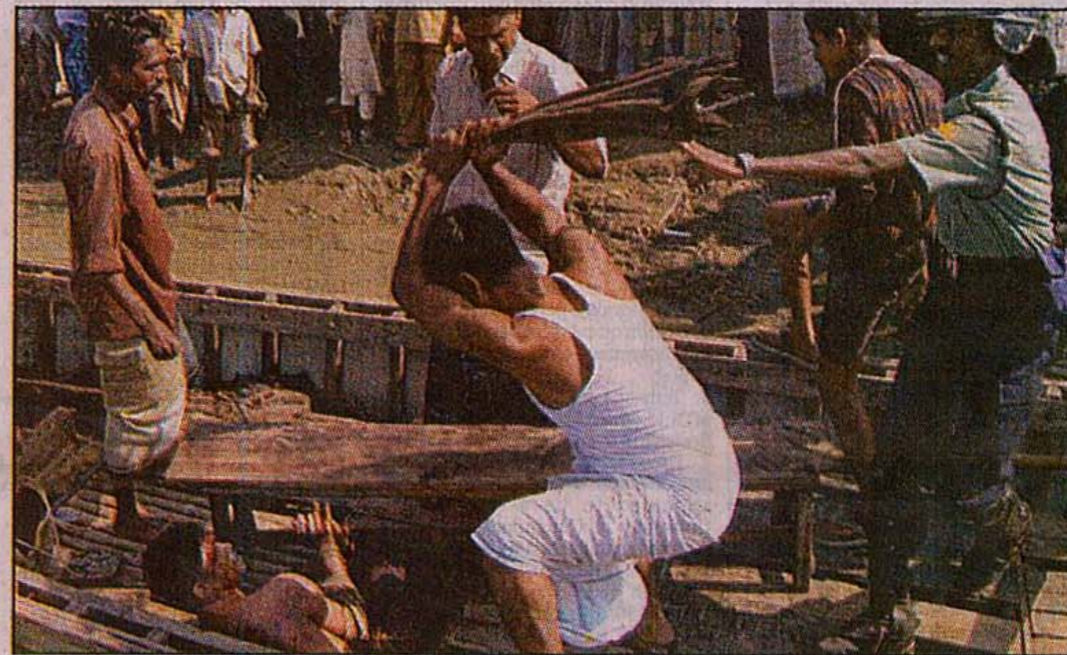


PHOTO: STAR

A local of Char Wazpur in Hazaribagh furiously beats up one of the seven alleged robbers tied up and dumped in the hold of a boat, while a policeman tries in vain to restrain him as a crowd looks on impassively yesterday.

Cairns thumps Bangladesh

SPORTS REPORTER

Star all-rounder Chris Cairns inspired New Zealand to a thumping 138-run win in the first one-day international of the three-match series against Bangladesh at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

Cairns, only playing in ODIs these days having announced his retirement from Test cricket last summer, rescued his side from potential danger with an invaluable 74 as New Zealand recovered to 224 from 94-5 after electing to bat first.

225 is the kind of target every Test playing side is expected to fancy.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Partha's bail rejected again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka Court yesterday rejected the bail petition of Saibal Saha Partha, accused in the case filed in connection with the August 21 carnage on an Awami League (AL) rally.

Judge Mohammad Motiur Rahman of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court gave the order upon a criminal appeal filed against the rejection order of the lower court.

Earlier, the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court rejected the bail petition after Partha's shown arrest in the case.

Nine people -- Tushar, Liton, Rahim, Walin, Abdur Rahman, Partha, Hannan, Badsha Miah and Ata -- have so far been shown arrested in the August 21 grenade attack case.

Meanwhile, the Second Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court fixed November 29 for hearing on charge framing against Partha in the case filed for his alleged involvement with the e-mail threat to kill AL Chief Sheikh Hasina.

COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL TREATY

Bangladesh starts mine demolition

UNB, Dhaka

Under the compulsion of an international treaty, Bangladesh yesterday started destroying its stockpile of anti-personnel mines.

"Like many other countries in the region, Bangladesh has a considerable stock of anti-personnel mines. And as per the treaty obligations, we

are going to destroy our stock by February 2005, retaining a minimum number for training purposes," said Master General of Ordnance Major General Jamil D Ahsan.

In line with the Anti-personnel Mine (APM) Ban Treaty, the Anti-personnel Landmine Destruction Programme in Bangladesh was launched at a ceremony held at the

Central Ammunition Depot demolition ground at Maona Sreepur where around 2 lakh anti personnel mines will be demolished.

To start off the destruction of the weapons, 75 mines were planted deep into ditches and detonated from long distances with wires fitted to the devices.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Moudud mum on judge's certificate tampering

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law minister Moudud Ahmed yesterday refused to comment on the alleged marks certificate tampering by Additional Judge of the High Court Faisal Mahmud Faizee.

"I'll not make any comment on the matter since the Chief Justice is looking into it," Moudud told reporters at his office yesterday.

The Chief Justice Syed J R Mudassir Hussain on Sunday

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Half of last 8 years' aid remains unused

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Governments in last eight years have failed to use about 49 percent of the financial aid received from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) because of slow project preparation and implementation.

From July 1996 to September 2004, the WB and ADB disbursed US \$ 6345.96 million for 76 development projects and the governments utilised only \$ 3244.17 million, Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman told the Jatiya

Sangsad yesterday.

"Many ministries exhaust local resources but fail to use foreign aid. It's because they are reluctant to meet the conditions attached by the donor agencies. Before releasing financial aid, donors want the concerned ministries to have preparation and feasibility study done in time," Saifur said while replying to a query.

He expressed dissatisfaction with the poor track record of the ministries in utilisation of the 'hard-earned' foreign aid.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

India withdraws antidumping measures

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

India has withdrawn antidumping measures on Bangladesh and gave assurance that restrictions on opening Letters of Credit (LC) in the seven northeastern Indian states would be removed to improve trade between the two countries.

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan said this at Zia International Airport yesterday after returning

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

Govt interfered in Jail Killing Case

AL claims in House to have evidence of it

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League in parliament yesterday launched a blistering attack on the government accusing it of interfering in the trial of the historic Jail Killing Case.

Taking floor on point of order senior AL lawmakers claimed they

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

The thousands of rickshaws kept haphazardly in the Agargaon dumping ground seized to check rise in unauthorised rickshaws in the capital ahead of Eid. The ongoing drive has turned into a heaven-sent opportunity for cops to make some quick bucks to liven up their Eid celebrations.

Rickshaw seizure lands in vice

Cops take money to release seized three-wheelers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seizing of illegal rickshaws in the capital has taken a surprising turn as traffic sergeants in connivance with brokers have been giving back the seized rickshaws taking Tk 500 to Tk 1,000 from the owners for each for the last few days.

This clandestine operation has been taking place right on the seizing spots as well as in the dumping ground by on-duty police, rendering the drive launched on October 12 to check any increase of unauthorised rickshaws before the upcoming Eid entirely meaningless.

Though there are only about 80,000 valid rickshaws in the city, some four lakh illegal rickshaws using duplicate numberplates are plying the city roads creating heavy traffic congestion.

In the dumping ground at Agargaon, owners of many seized rickshaws with valid papers alleged

they have to pay Tk 50 to Tk 100 as entry fee to the ground just to find out if their rickshaws are among the 2000 to 3000 rickshaws dumped there.

Rickshaw owners alleged one have to pay Tk 400 to Tk 1,000 to

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Sehri-Iftar

Ramadan	Nov	Sehri	Iftar
19	3		5:22
20	4	4:45	5:21

Prayer Timing

November 3		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:44	4:50
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:00	4:15
Maghrib	5:22	5:28
Esha	7:15	7:45

Source: Islamic Foundation

সাহায্যের আবেদন

দেশের সর্ববৃহৎ প্রতিমহানার
রহমতে আলম ইসলাম মিশন

পবিত্র রমজান উপলক্ষে আপনার যাবতীয় দান, সদকা, যাকাত, কাফফারা ও মানুত রহমতে আলম ইসলাম মিশনের ১২০০ (বার শতাধিক) ছাত্র-ছাত্রী প্রতিম, মিছকীন, অন্ধ, লা-ওয়ারিশ, নও মুসলিম প্রতিপালনে দান করুন।

হিসাব নং-০০০১৪৫, অগ্রণী ব্যাংক, ফার্মগেট শাখা।

যোগাযোগের ঠিকানা : ১নং রেলগেট, তেজগাঁও, ঢাকা-১২১৫।
(ফার্মগেটের পূর্ব পাশে)। ফোন : ৯১১৯৩০৯, ৯১১২২৮১।

সভাপতি সাধারণ সম্পাদক
আলহাজ্ব মোস্তাফিজুর রহমান আলহাজ্ব মিল্লা মোঃ গোলাম কিব্রিয়া
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