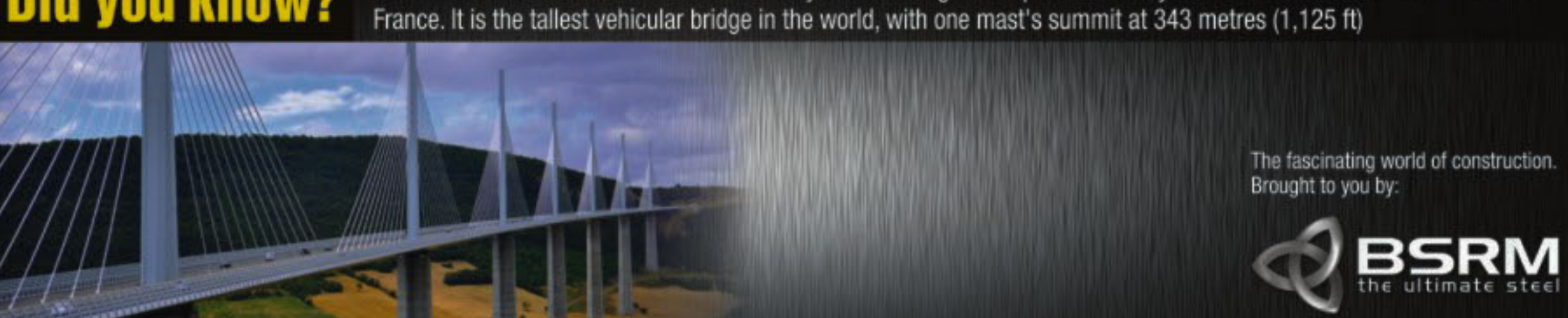


Did you know? The Millau Viaduct is an enormous cable-stayed road-bridge that spans the valley of the river Tarn near Millau in southern France. It is the tallest vehicular bridge in the world, with one mast's summit at 343 metres (1,125 ft)



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MRP project kicks off

223 collect forms on first day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Only 24 persons were enrolled yesterday for machine readable passport on the first day of the process at Department of Immigration and Passport (DIP) office in the capital's Agargaon, although 223 persons collected forms.

There was a large crowd at the passport office to know about the procedure of getting new passport. But the DIP was least prepared to brief them.

The government yesterday launched the MRP and machine readable visa (MRV) project only from the Agargaon office to meet an agreement signed by the 187 member countries of International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).

The project will run from 34 passport offices across the country once they are equipped with necessary manpower and machinery.

"The people enrolled yesterday will get MRP in the first week of May," said a local

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

4 more new species of butterfly spotted

EMRAN HOSSAIN

Researchers of Jahangirnagar University have spotted four new species of butterflies on the campus. With this, the variety of butterfly species on the campus rose to 84.

The newly spotted species are Bamboo Treebrown (Lethe europa), an endangered species, Chestnut Angle (Odontoptilum angulata), Blue Pansy (Junonia orithya), and Tiny Grass Blue (Zizula gaika).

A five-member team comprising of a teacher and students of Zoology Department spotted the species. Associate Prof Monwar Hossain led the team.

In 1996, Ismail Hossain and Shafique Haider Chowdhury of Chittagong University and Monwar Hossain identified 44 species on the campus. Thereafter, 36 more species were identified until 2003.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5



Clockwise, Tiny Grass Blue, Chestnut Angle, Blue Pansy and Treebrown, the new species of butterflies recently sighted in Jahangirnagar University.

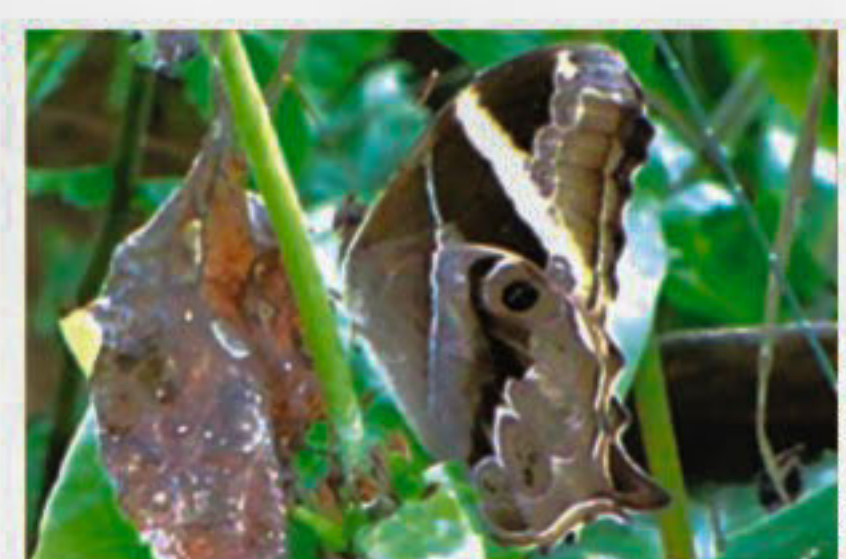
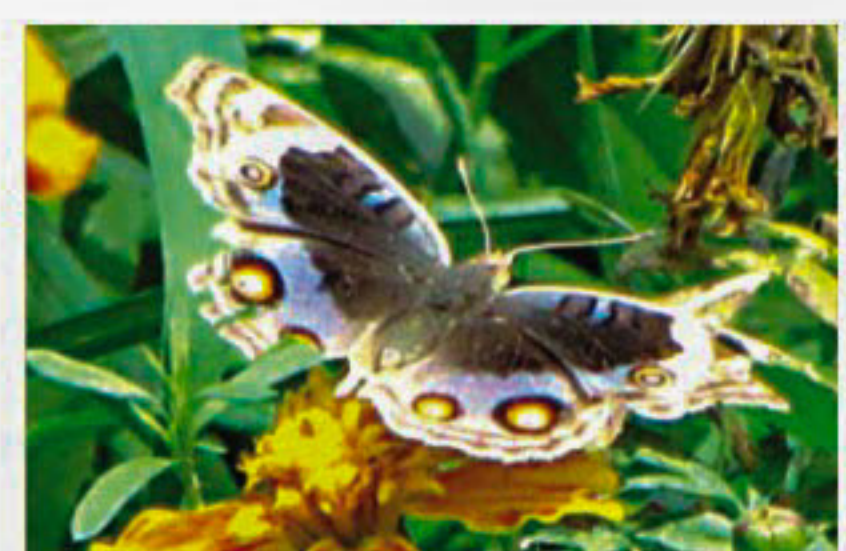
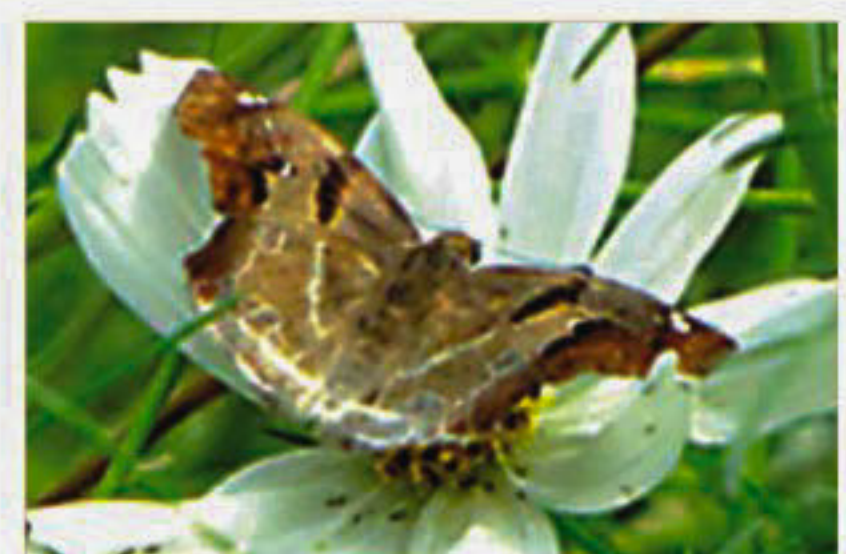


PHOTO COURTESY

Govt using admin to influence by-polls

Alleges Delwar

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain alleged that the government is using the local administration to manipulate Bhola-3 by-election.

The BNP leader alleged that the ruling party candidate has violated the election code of conduct after the announcement of the schedule for the by-election.

Delwar, at a press briefing at his residence in the city yesterday afternoon, made the fresh demand of deployment of army in Bhola-3 for free, fair and impartial election.

"The ruling Awami League men are issuing threat and intimidation to BNP leaders and workers in the constituency," he said.

Delwar said the administration did not take any step against such violations even after lodging written complaint.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

HR Watch asks govt not to curb ACC power

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Human Rights Watch, a New York-based rights body, asked the government not to adopt any amendment that would restrict the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to take independent action against corrupt government officials and ruling party members.

Expressing concern over the move to amend the ACC laws, HRW Asia Director Brad Adams said, "Public sector corruption is a grave problem in Bangladesh, corroding faith in government and undermining the rule of law and efforts at reforming institutions like the police and army."

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Project for widow allowance stuck

2 ministries fight for sole authority over the scheme

ALPHA ARZU

A project for providing monthly allowance to poor widows and female divorcees in fiscal year 2010-11 is stuck because of claims of sole authority over the scheme by the social welfare and women affairs ministries.

Thus the government is unable to proceed with the project.

The debate on which ministry should get the project sparked as the finance ministry primarily decided to shift its charge from the women affairs to the

social welfare ministry at a meeting last month. The project for FY 2009-10 was under the women affairs ministry.

However a few high officials said the ministries were bickering over the right to the scheme to have the control over such a huge fund but not to serve destitute women.

Sources at the women and children affairs ministry said most of the beneficiaries of the scheme are illiterate and of rural areas. They feel more comfortable to talk to women employees of the ministry than employees of the social welfare

ministry who are mainly male. They also said, as the project is for women, it should go to the women affairs ministry.

But the social welfare ministry is trying to take up the project on the ground that it comes under "social welfare activities," they added.

Minister for Women and Children Affairs Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury told The Daily Star that the social welfare ministry might run the project more efficiently.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Cancer affects 9,000 kids a yr

Recovery rate 10-20pc

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 7,000-9,000 children are diagnosed with cancer every year in the country but less than 500 receive treatment while the survival rate is only around 10-20 per cent.

Speakers observed this at a roundtable discussion on Exploration and Setting Priorities for Childhood Cancer in Bangladesh yesterday.

Absence of national cancer registry or statistics, inadequate treatment facilities, lack of timely detection, wrong diagnosis and high treatment cost are largely responsible for such a large number of deaths of cancer-affected children.

An additional 10 crore children will be affected by skin cancer while more than five and a half crore will be affected by eye cancer due to climate change by 2075, they observed.

British Columbia Cancer Agency, Canada, Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital and Foundation for Research and

SEE PAGE 7 COL 2

NAHAR TEA GARDEN 200 more trees plundered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police force from Sreemangal and a detective branch team from Maulvibazar visited Aslom Punji at Nahar Tea Garden yesterday following a written complaint filed by Khasia people Wednesday over chopping down undesignated and young trees.

Dibarmin, member of the local Khasia community in the Punji (village), said around 200 unmarked trees were felled in Aslom Paan (betel leaf) Punji, yesterday deploying a host of labourers.

"Police while visiting the spot agreed with us that unmarked trees are being cut but we don't know what they

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Schoolboy killed under truck wheels

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narail

A six-year-old schoolboy was crushed under the wheels of a speedy truck in Narail yesterday morning.

Rana, son of Matiar of Kashipur union in Lohagara upazila, was a student of class one at Kashipur Primary School.

The kid died on the spot around 10:00am as the truck ran over him on Kashipur Bridge, witnesses said.

The driver fled away driving the truck. A case was filed in this connection with Lohagara Police Station.

KUSHTIA BNP 2 groups hold separate meetings

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Two factions of Kushtia district BNP yesterday hosted separate meetings of party's southwestern district units amid chaos and to the embarrassment of central leaders here.

One of the factions even kept the central leaders including BNP Standing Committee Member Moyeen Khan and Krishak Dal President Shamsuzzaman

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8



PHOTO: STAR

EMBANKMENT BREACHES 50 villages go under water

2 lakh marooned in Aila-hit area of Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

At least 50 villages under Koira and Dakop upazilas were inundated as the ring embankments developed breaches at several points Wednesday afternoon.

Over two lakh people of Aila affected areas were marooned in misery without food and drinking water.

The affected villages of Koira are Patakhali, Pathorkhali, Moharajpur, Bedkashi, Golkhali, Angtiara, Choramukha, Gharilal, Botolbazar, Barhobari, Mathbari, Hayatkhali, Kherampur, Kalna, Bagali, Arjunpur, Katina, Bania and Pokamali.

Koira upazila Chairman Mohsin Reza said the situation is likely to worsen as two more ring embankments are under threat due to tidal surge of the river, Kobadak.

Koira upazila nirbahi officer (JNO) said the surge of water is hampering reconstruction of embankments.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

2 pirates beaten to death, 7 hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Locals severely beat up nine pirates, killing two on the spot, when they were attempting to loot a boat in a remote char area on the river Jamuna in Daulatpur upazila of Manikganj yesterday.

Police rescued and arrested seven pirates in a critically injured state. The dead or injured robbers could not be identified immediately.

Police also retrieved several machetes and locally made weapons to be used by the pirates.

Shawkat Hossain, officer-in-charge of Daulatpur Police Station, said 20 to 25 cattle traders on an engine boat were heading towards a cattle market at Bera in Pabna to buy cows.

When they reached Board Bazar area around 9:00am, a gang of 15 to 20 pirates attacked them.

However, when faced by fierce resistance from the traders

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Refreshing gesture at border

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

A Bangladeshi woman, living in an enclave near the international border on the Indian side, has given birth to a child at a hospital in Cooch Behar district, her nearest medical facility.

Superintendent of Dinhat Hospital Dr Nikhil Das said Asma Bibi (25), admitted on humanitarian grounds in a case of emergency, gave birth to the male baby on Monday. Both the mother and child are doing fine.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Saarc Summit to focus on climate battle

Bhutan set to host regional meet first time

REZAUL KARIM

The Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan is all set for hosting the 16th South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) Summit scheduled for April 28-29.

Leaders of eight South Asian nations will gather in the Bhutanese capital of Thimphu and chart out a roadmap for conserving environment to face the climate change, poverty alleviation, promoting cooperation in hardcore economic areas and curbing terrorism.

Bhutan is hosting the 2-day Saarc summit for the first time since the organisation was

formed in Dhaka in 1985.

Heads of state and government of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and host Bhutan will participate in the conference.

Foreign ministry officials said the Saarc members are keen to work towards building a politically harmonious and economically integrated South Asia.

It is felt that closer economic ties within the region will be the cornerstone of development, prosperity and peace in the region.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

OnlinePoll ✓

Do you think National Board of Revenue and other authorities should scrutinise income and expenditure of every citizen in a bid to reduce corruption?

Yes (53.7%)
 No (44.7%)
 No Comments (1.6%)

Total votes: 512

TODAY'S POLL

Do you agree with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina that past BNP and caretaker governments are responsible for ongoing electricity and gas crises?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net