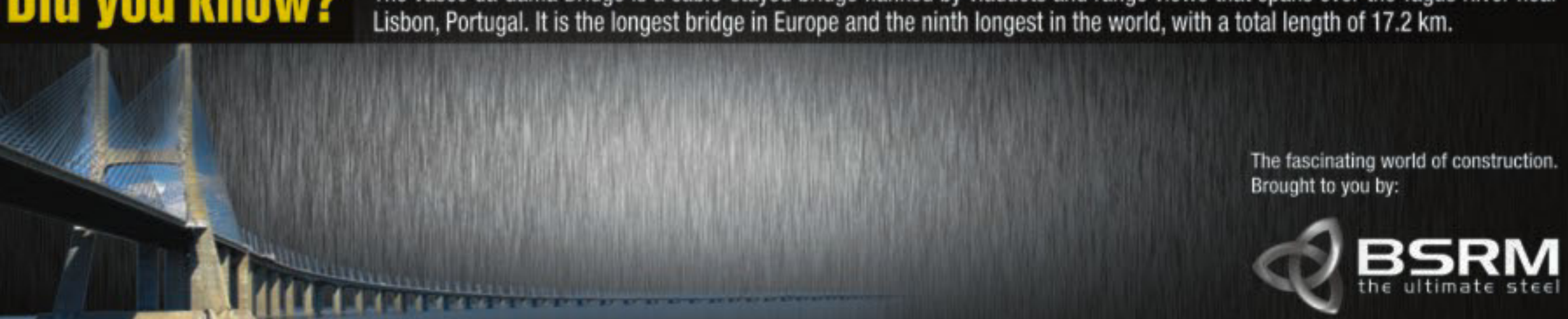


**Did you know?** The Vasco da Gama Bridge is a cable-stayed bridge flanked by viaducts and range views that spans over the Tagus River near Lisbon, Portugal. It is the longest bridge in Europe and the ninth longest in the world, with a total length of 17.2 km.



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# 6-month maternity leave proposed for public sector

**ALPHA ARZU**

The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs has proposed fully paid maternity leave for six months instead of four months for the women in government services.

Laila Jesmin, deputy secretary (administration) of the women and children affairs ministry, on Wednesday told The Daily Star, "We have already sent the proposal to the Finance Division to issue notification."

The Finance Division will hold a meeting next week in this regard.

Laila said this initiative would help improve the country's malnutrition status of children, as the mother will be able to breast-feed her baby for six months after birth.

Child experts suggest breast-feeding for six months, which has many advantages to the infant's health and can save them from early illness and death.

Now, women are entitled to four-month maternity leave and they get this opportunity for two times.

However, in private sectors including garment factories, a large number of women are working without getting any maternity leave.

So, the women rights activists demand that the maternity leave be given in all sectors and that will contribute to women empowerment.

Dr Maleka Banu, general secretary of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, said the government should enforce the rule of six months' maternity leave in all sectors to ensure child and mother care.

There are many sectors where women are working without maternity leave benefits, and in some cases, they lose their jobs after they conceive, she added.

Prof Fatima Parveen Chowdhury, director of Institute of Public Health and Nutrition, said, "If a mother does not get a six-month leave, she may deprive her baby of breast feeding which is a must for mental and physical growth of a child".

She also said the government would enforce the rule to fight against children's malnutrition. The rate of children suffering from malnutrition is still high in the country, she noted.

Female labour force in urban areas comes to 28 lakh while it is 93 lakh in rural areas. They are mainly working in readymade garment industry, pottery, agriculture and different small industries, according to the Bangladesh Labour Force Survey.



A ransacked election office of Awami League candidate for Bhola-3 parliamentary seat Nurunnabi Chowdhury Shawon at Lalmoan Bazar yesterday. Two of his election offices were ransacked by rival BNP activists. (Story on page 1) PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## ETV chairman Salam held at Mumbai airport

*Pistol, bullets seized*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

The chairman of Ekushey Television Ltd (ETV) was arrested yesterday at Mumbai International Airport for carrying arms illegally, said Mumbai police.

ETV Chairman Abdus Salam Mohammed Kareem, 50, was inside the airport when Central Industrial Security Force personnel frisked him and recovered a pistol and seven cartridges from his bag, said Inspector B N Tambe of Sahar Airport Police Station.

## TU leaders demand Tk 5,000 national minimum wage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Trade union leaders yesterday demanded that the government fix the national minimum wage at Tk 5,000 given the rising prices of most essentials and services that had left the lower income groups in trouble in the recent years.

They were speaking at a roundtable titled "National minimum wage should not be fixed at a level lower than poverty line" organised by Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad at Dhaka Reporters' Unity in the capital.

"The labour force in the country is passing through a critical time as prices of essentials have gone up several times but their wage has not increased accordingly," said Roy Ramesh Chandra, general secretary of Jatiya Sramik League.

He presented the keynote paper at the discussion.

Low wages in various sectors of the country are forcing the

## Student 'pushed' out of train, dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A college student died after he was allegedly pushed out of a running train in the city's Malibagh early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Sohanur Rahman Sohel, 23, a degree student of Narsingdi Government College.

Sohanur met the tragic death when he was on his way to Dhaka from Narsingdi.

His father Idris Ali told The Daily Star that Sohanur left home to take private tuition

## New intelligence unit of BDR in the offing

Three wings of the agency to have 2,700 members

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) authorities have finalised formation of its new full-fledged intelligence agency with three wings—Border Security Bureau (BSB), Regional Intelligence Bureau (RIB) and Unit Intelligence Branch (UIB).

About 67 officers will lead the three wings with the help of about 2,700 members, sources in the paramilitary border force said.

Twenty percent of the officers will be recruited from civilians while 30 percent from retired army officers and the rest 50 percent from serving army officers, the organogram of the agency says.

The aspirants for civilian posts must have a

## BCL men block highway after Ruet clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Bangladesh Chhatra League activists of Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (Ruet) barricaded the Dhaka-Rajshahi highway for over three and a half hours on Thursday night.

Over 300 activists put up a barricade in front of the institute around 10:00pm, protesting the arrest of two of their men following a factional clash. The traffic movement remained halted in the area.

They also burned logs and banners of other parties during the protests.

## 4 killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

Four people were killed and another was injured in separate road accidents in Narsingdi and Chapainawabganj yesterday.

UNB reports: Three people were killed and another was injured in a road accident at Chaytabo in Narsingdi Sadar.

Two of the dead were identified as Montu Mia, 50, and Aminur Rahman, 35, but the identity of the other could not be known immediately.

Police said two passengers and another unidentified driver of a CNG-run taxi died on the spot as a bus rammied into the taxi while overtaking a truck at about 5:15pm.

Another passenger of the taxi injured in the accident was rushed to Dhaka Medical



Transparent ballot boxes are being taken to the polling centres of Bhola-3 constituency under strict protection ahead of today's by-polls there. PHOTO: STAR

## LAND DISPUTE 1 killed as AL, BNP men clash in Keraniganj

UNB, Keraniganj

A man was killed and 15 others were injured in a clash between the activists of BNP and Awami League over land dispute at Bokter Char in South Keraniganj yesterday.

Local sources said the hour-long clash ensued at about 11:00am when AL leader Mokter Hossain along with 15-20 supporters attacked the house of BNP leader JB Member, leaving 16 injured on both sides.

The injured were admitted to Dhaka Medical College

## Brahmaputra dam won't hurt India

Assures China

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

China has assured India that the dam it is building on the Tsang Po river (known as Brahmaputra in India which flows into Bangladesh) would not affect the water flow downstream.

Indian External Affairs Minister S M Krishna on Thursday told parliament that China has given the assurance during his recent visit to Beijing to mark 60 years of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

Krishna said, "When I met my Chinese counterpart, the

**OnlinePoll**

Do you think authorities concerned will give their sincere effort to recover the grabbed canals of Dhaka city?

Yes (84.7%)  
No (12.5%)  
No Comments (2.8%)

**Total votes: 281**

**TODAY'S POLL**

Do you think Awami League should sever all links with BCL for congenial atmosphere at educational institutions as five eminent educationalists suggest?

Please cast your vote at [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net)

**Prayer Timing**

April 24

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-25	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-27	6-31
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

**SALE OF LAND AT ATTRACTIVE LOCATION**

8 (Eight) Bighas of land adjacent to wide road of Baridhara Bashundhara and located in front of North South University and at the north side of Jamuna Future Park is ready for sale with at a time payment. The land is ready for immediate construction work. The interested persons/companies are requested to contact.

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