

Did you know?

The Weihe Grand Bridge is a part of a high-speed railway line connecting Zhengzhou and Xi'an in China, and has the longest span of any bridge in the world. Opened in 2010, it is 79,732 meters (261,590 ft) long, crossing the Wei River not once but twice.



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Owner could not care less

He bothered not to take design approval, do proper piling on marshy land

HELEMUL ALAM

The owner of the city's collapsed building that killed at least 23 people on Tuesday, neither took permission for design and construction nor built it with sufficient materials.

Experts and officials concerned said the five-storey building is an example of gross violation of building construction rules.

The building of Abbas Uddin toppled onto three tin-shed houses in the capital's Madhya Begunbari on Tuesday night.

The building was not constructed with approved plan and design rather built on marshy land without proper piling, said experts and officials of Rajdhanai Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk).

"The building was constructed without taking any permission from Rajuk and we have filed a case against the owner of the building as per the rules," said Chairman of Rajuk Md Nurul Huda.

He said this is one of the 5,000 buildings identified by Rajuk as having been built without its permission and approved plan or design.

"We have already started taking action against those buildings," said the Rajuk chairman.

Authorised officer-2 of Rajuk Shafiquel Islam said the owner

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An excavator is making way for heavy construction equipment to join the rescue operation at the Begunbari building collapse site in the capital yesterday. Right, another unauthorised five-storey building in the locality posing similar threat.

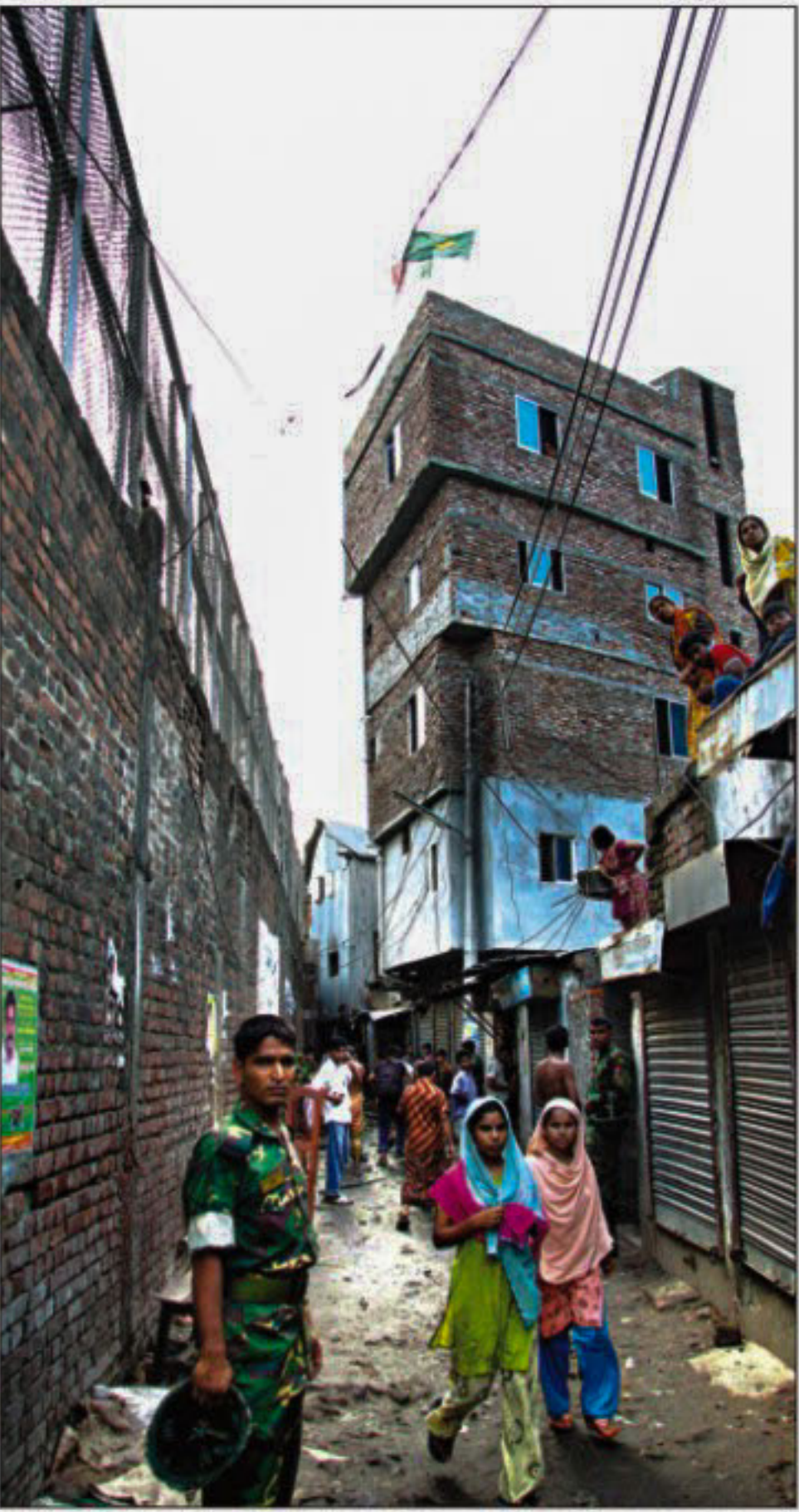


PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Japanese PM quits over US air base row

MAIL & GUARDIAN ONLINE

Japan's centre-left Prime Minister, Yukio Hatoyama, tearfully resigned yesterday, just nine months after a stunning election win, his brief reign derailed by a row over an unpopular United States airbase.

Hatoyama ended more than half a century of conservative rule in an electoral earthquake last August, but soon earned a reputation for crippling indecision at the helm of the world's second-biggest economy.

The 63-year-old millionaire,

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No duty on import of textbook paper

Govt moves to ensure quality printing in primary textbooks by local bidders

WASIM BIN HABIB

The government has taken an initiative to withdraw tariff on imported textbook paper in the face of protests from local printers following its invitation of international tender for printing primary level textbooks for the academic year 2011.

The primary and mass education ministry sent a letter to the National Board of Revenue to that effect yesterday, said officials of the ministry, and the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB).

The move is aimed at making it easier for the local printers of textbooks to participate in the international bidding.

The government recently for the first time decided to print all textbooks of classes I to III through an international tender for ensuring quality, and to avoid the risk of missing the deadlines for distribution.

It also decided for the first time to print four-colour books for classes I and II, which will require higher quality paper than what the government usually supplies to printers for

textbooks. And that will in turn require the local printers to import the paper.

The local printers have been protesting against the invitation of international tender for more than a month now, alleging that the local printing industry will be destroyed as a result of the move.

They, on many occasions, said that the local printers will not have any chance of winning in the international tender since they have to pay 57 percent tax on imported printing paper, a burden that is not mandatory on foreign bidders.

The local printers also do not have the adequate manpower and technical qualifications for competing successfully in the international tender, they added.

As a part of their ongoing protests, local printing press owners, and the industry staff formed a human chain in front of the NCTB office in the capital yesterday, where they announced that they will refrain from printing books of classes IV and V as well, if the government goes on with the international tender.

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PM among first 15 MRP holders

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday launched the machine readable passport (MRP) and machine readable visa (MRV) elevating the country's passport and visa system to international standard.

"Introduction of MRP and MRV would put an end to tampering of passport and visa and harassment particularly faced by the innocent expatriate Bangladeshi workers," she said while inaugurating the launching of the MRP and MRV at a function at the Osmani Memorial Hall.

The premier said the MRP and MRV would also play a role in checking drugs and arms smugglers as well as militant and terrorist activities.

"No more handwritten passport...today we have entered the digital era with the introduction of MRP and MRV," Hasina told the function.

In March 2009, the present government approved the

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24 killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

Twenty-four people, including six children, were killed and 37 others injured in separate road accidents in Bagerhat, Comilla, Sirajganj and Satkhira districts yesterday.

Of the deceased, 16 died in Bagerhat, five at Comilla, two at Sirajganj and one at Satkhira.

A correspondent from Bagerhat reports, at least 16 people, including two children, were killed and 30 sustained injuries as a Mongla-bound bus collided head-on with a mini truck on Khulna-Mawa highway at Madrashaghat in Mollahat upazila at about 4:30am.

Twelve of the deceased were identified as Debasish Mondal, 42, Samiran Mridha, 40, Manjur Rahman, 40, Monirul Islam, 40, Nazim Mollah, 40, Liza Akhter, 4, Mridula Sarkar, 35, Abu Syed, 45, Farida Begum, 35, Shikder Mojaffar Hossain, 32, Arifa Akhter, Ani, 9 and Abdul Latif Hawlader, 65.

The identities of the other deceased could not be known immediately. The condition of the nine injured was stated to be critical.

Police and fire fighters with the help of local people conducted the salvage operations.

Officer-in-charge Masud Alam of Mollahat Police Station confirmed the incident.

The bus driver, Mamun Talukder, was undergoing treatment at the upazila health complex under police custody, he said.

UNB adds: A bus hit a CNG-run auto-rickshaw in Chandsri area of Chaudagram upazila in Comilla, killing five people, including four children, and injuring four others.

The deceased were identified as Fulmati Begum, 55, her daughter Ranu Akhter, 12, and grand-daughters Mamuna

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ROAD ACCIDENTS

Tough law on cards to punish offenders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has moved to make a law styled as Road Transport & Traffic Act ensuring provision for stringent punishment to those responsible for a road accident, Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain told the House yesterday.

He said the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983 and the penal codes do not award major punishment to the people behind fatal road accidents.

"Therefore, the government has taken measures to make a new law by updating the motor vehicle ordinance," the minister added while replying to lawmakers' queries.

He said the government has reconstituted the 32-member national road safety council and taken various

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BUDGET IN JS No more long speech this time

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister AMA Muhith will present the budget for the next fiscal year in parliament on June 10 through a power point presentation, instead of making a traditional long speech.

This is the first time when a finance minister will use modern technology to unveil

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No admission test in colleges this year too

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The students passed this year's SSC or equivalent examinations will be admitted to the colleges based on their results.

No admission test will be held this year but GPA-5 achievers will get priority.

The government yesterday published a policy for admission in 2010-2011 academic session.

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Prayer Timing		
June 3		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-45	6-50
Esha	8-15	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

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Nepal braces for confrontation

SYED ZAIN AL-MAHMOOD from Kathmandu

Nepal is bracing for renewed political confrontation after a Maoist deadline for the resignation of Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal expired Wednesday.

The leading parties in the ruling coalition -- Nepali Congress and Communist Party of Nepal United Marxist-Leninist (UML) -- struck a deal with the main opposition Unified Communist Party of Nepal Maoist (UCPN-M) in the dying hours of May 28 to extend the term of the interim parliament by a year.

Under the terms of the 3-point deal the tenure of the Constituent Assembly (CA) would be extended and the parties would take decisive steps in the peace process while the prime

minister would make way for a government of national consensus.

However, the agreement unravelled quickly with the Maoists giving Madhav Kumar "five days to resign".

"They gave us a cheque," Maoist Vice Chairman Baburam Bhattarai told the media. "We will soon go to the bank with that cheque. If it bounces, we know what to do."

The Maoists claimed that there had been a tacit understanding that the PM would step down within days in exchange for the support of Maoist MPs for extension of the CA. This has been denied by the other parties, who accuse the Maoists of political brinkmanship.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Arjun Narsingh

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CCC ELECTION

Poll symbols allocated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Election Commission yesterday handed election symbols to eight candidates running for the Chittagong City Corporation election slated for June 17.

Returning Officer (RO) Jesmin Tuli gave out the symbols to the candidates at Muslim Institute Hall in the port city in the morning.

Awami League backed candidate ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury has been allocated "ship" as electoral symbol while BNP-supported candidate Manjur Alam Manju "pineapple".

Among other candidates, Solaiman Alam Sheikh of Jatiya Party (Ershad) got "television" and Md Rafiqul Islam of Islamic Andolon "locker".

OnlinePoll

Do you think it has become imperative to form a strict law against stalking?

☐ Yes (89.2%)
 ☐ No (8.1%)
 ☐ No Comments (2.7%)

Total votes: 296

TODAY'S POLL

How do you look at the shutting down of Amar Desh and Channel 1?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

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