


Did you know? Jintang Bridge is a highway bridge with a cable-stayed bridge portion, built in Zhejiang, China. It is the longest bridge in Zhoushan Trans-oceanic bridges with a length of 26,540 meters, connecting Jintang Island and Zhenhai.



The fascinating world of construction. Brought to you by:

BSRM
the ultimate steel

World Cup THINK Big Mega Offer

Value Buy: 32" LCD TV (3409) RSP: Tk. 75,000 World Cup Offer: 65,000

Value Buy: 42" LCD TV (3609) RSP: Tk. 125,000 World Cup Offer: 105,000

Value Buy: 47" LCD TV (3609) RSP: Tk. 175,000 World Cup Offer: 173,000

Offer available on other models also.

TRANSCOM DIGITAL
think electronics... think DIGITAL

For More Information: 8855366-8, 01712 885463

JUTE GENOME DECODED Growers to get benefit in 5 yrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The farmers can expect to get benefits of the scientific breakthrough of decoding the jute plant genome in five years.

"I hope we can reach the benefits of jute genome sequencing to the farmers within five years," said Dr Maqsood Alam, a Bangladeshi professor of the University of Hawaii, who led the team that has successfully decoded genome of the natural fibre.

Dr Alam, who had earlier decoded genome of papaya in the US and rubber plant in Malaysia, was talking to journalists at the Ministry of Agriculture yesterday at his first press appearance after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina revealed the achievement of Bangladeshi researchers on Wednesday.

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, accompanying Dr Alam at the briefing, spoke of a wide range of possibilities in the jute sector that the unlocking of the genome now offers.

"We can now venture to develop fine quality fabrics from jute; develop jute varieties resistant to pests, drought and salinity; and develop technologies so that jute can be grown round the year," Matia told newsmen.

Experts say this gene sequencing would help improve the fibre length and quality, including colours and strength, and develop high-yielding, saline soil- and pest-tolerant jute varieties through genetic engineering.

"The genome decode of cotton has made a revolution in textiles. We can also do something similar with jute. We want to use jute fibres in the textiles industry," said the minister.

The Middle Eastern countries import around 1,900 tonnes of jute leaves and eat those to get relief from heat.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 3



A schoolgirl rushes across a street in torrential rain in the capital's Motijheel yesterday. The monsoon, crucial to agriculture, hit the country on Tuesday.

Govt moves to make jute a must in packaging

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cabinet yesterday approved a draft bill seeking mandatory use of jute in packaging of various commodities.

"The bill will be placed in parliament soon for passage," prime minister's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad told reporters after the cabinet meeting held at Bangladesh Secretariat.

Once this draft bill is enacted as a law, all government and non-government organisations engaged in production and distribution of food, sugar and agricultural inputs like fertiliser, seed etc will have to use jute in packaging of their goods, said Jute and Textile Minister Abdul Latif Siddiqui yesterday afternoon.

He was replying to lawmakers' queries in parliament.

The cabinet's nod to the draft bill -- Compulsory usage of jute in packaging of all products 2010 -- came hard on

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

REAL ESTATE BILL 9 months gone, no JS scrutiny yet

Scopes plentiful for conflict of interest as realtor-lawmaker also tasked with the vetting

SHAKHAWAT LITON and RASHIDUL HASAN

Fate of the proposed private real estate development bill to protect buyer interests and save wetlands in and around the capital remains uncertain as a parliamentary body has held back its passage for over nine months in the name of scrutinising it.

Surprisingly, the parliamentary standing committee on the housing and public works ministry last year formed a three-member sub-committee headed by a real estate developer-turned-lawmaker primarily for scrutiny of the bill.

Moreover, a member of the standing committee -- Nasrul Hamid Bipu -- is a real estate developer, and president of Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (Rehab).

Section 188 (2) of the Rules of Procedure of the Jatiya Sangsad says that no member shall be appointed to a committee who has a personal, pecuniary or direct interest in any matter, which may be considered by that committee.

Bipu however claimed that the provision is not applicable to him as membership of the committee does not serve his direct interest.

"If the rules are applicable to me, many ministers and lawmakers are not eligible to be members of parliamentary bodies," he said.

On Sunday, at a meeting with the housing state minister, he joined the Bashundhara chief in blasting Rajuk and refusing to accept the detail area plan for saving water bodies in the capital.

Leading environmental and professional bodies at a press conference in March alleged that real estate developers-turned-lawmakers have held back passage of the proposed bill.

They also submitted a memorandum to the prime minister demanding immediate passage of it to protect buyer interests and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Govt firm on saving wetlands DAP review body to skip meet if Shah Alam comes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will not bow down to any intimidation by realtors over approval of the Detailed Area Plan (DAP) for a planned and healthy capital, said state minister for housing Abdul Mannan Khan yesterday.

"A few miscreants will not be able to subdue the government and get away with their misdeeds," said the state minister at a seminar in a city hotel.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

600 Biman fliers left stranded

Carrier fails to get permission to run leased aircraft

SOHEL PARVEZ

Nearly 600 passengers are stranded at hotels in Riyadh, Jeddah and Dhaka after Biman was forced to use a smaller aircraft on two routes.

The problem appeared when the civil aviation ministry refused to give a 24-year-old leased Boeing 747-200 extension of waiver for registration with the ministry, which forced Biman to halt its flights with the aircraft.

The plane was running on Dhaka-Jeddah and Dhaka-Dammam-Riyadh routes.

To bail the passengers out, Biman deployed one of the DC-10s it has. However, the Boeing had the capacity to carry 542 passengers while the DC-10 can only carry 314 people.

The passengers whom the DC-10 could not carry were being sent to hotels and Biman expects around 400 to join them in the next two days. Those passengers were put on later flights. This has been going on since June 14.

This would cause Biman around Tk 22.50 lakh financial loss approximately, said Biman Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Muhammad Zakiul Islam.

"We expect the stranded passengers to be able to reach their destinations within a week," he said.

Insiders say that the ministry had earlier

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

STUDENT UNION ELECTIONS 50 injured as BCL factions clash

A CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

At least 50 persons including journalists, politicians and police were injured yesterday in a clash between Bangladesh Chhatra League factions over student union election at Gopalganj Government Bangabandhu University College.

The house of district Mohila Awami League president Nasima Akhter Rubel was ransacked and a motorcycle was damaged during the clash.

Following the unrest, the college authorities suspended the election at 12:30pm yesterday and shut the college for an indefinite period. The principal ordered students to leave the halls immediately.

Local Press Club and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



An activist of ruling Awami League backed Chhatra League brandishes a machete during a factional feud at Bangabandhu University College in Gopalganj yesterday.

Electric trains to link Ctg with Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is to run electric trains between Dhaka and Chittagong, Communications Minister Syed Abdul Hossain told the House yesterday.

He said a preliminary development project profile (PDPP) has been sent to the planning commission for approval and collecting foreign assistance to this effect.

Replying to lawmakers' queries, the minister also said the government has planned to purchase 1,090 buses and 650 trucks in phases to strengthen the communication network.

He said of those, 490 buses would be bought in the next fiscal year.

The communications minister said the government has planned to set up six driving schools at six divisional headquarters -- if required in phases.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Sahara Khatun placed a bill seeking to extend the time of the speedy trial act by another two years for disposal of 2,512 cases filed under the act.

Once the bill is passed, the law will be effective until April 8, 2012. The bill was sent to the parliamentary standing committee on home ministry for scrutiny.

Meanwhile, participating in the discussion on the proposed

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

MP assaulted over fertiliser distribution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Leaders and activists of Krishak League assaulted the local lawmaker Meraj Uddin Mollah at Mohonpur upazila parishad here yesterday following an intra-party rivalry over recruitment of retailers and selection of farmers for fertiliser distribution.

The incident occurred around 2:00pm when the lawmaker from Rajshahi-3 (Paba-Mohonpur) constituency went to the upazila parishad auditorium for inaugurating the fertiliser distribution programme, said witnesses, police and party men.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Sangu back on gas production Power supply improves

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gas production in the off-shore Sangu field resumed on Wednesday following repair of one of the power generators installed on its off-shore platform, sources said.

Production was suspended on Tuesday as one of the two generators went out of order, and a back-up generator failed to respond.

The field's British operator Cairn could not send technicians to the automated off-shore platform immediately due to rough weather. After 2:30 pm on Wednesday, a Bangladesh Navy ship took Cairn's technicians to the platform, and they repaired the generators.

Production in the gas field resumed in full swing around 9:00 pm.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

PM presses for MP wealth card

Ministers, advisers to donate 10 days' salary for Nimtoli, Begunbari victims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed the National Board of Revenue (NBR) to submit income tax returns of ministers and lawmakers to finance ministry so that it could make their wealth statements public.

The directive came at a regular cabinet meeting at the secretariat with the PM in the chair.

Earlier on several occasions Finance Minister AMA Muhith had pledged to make the wealth statements of ministers and lawmakers public before the current budget session.

A number of ministers at the meeting said they had submitted wealth statements to Election Commission prior to the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Elevated Expressway project on schedule

Finance minister doubts communications' projection

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communication Minister Syed Abul Hossain yesterday said the government aims to complete the first phase of Dhaka Elevated Expressway project within its tenure.

The minister said this at the daylong workshop on Dhaka Elevated Expressway (DEE) project organised by Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA) at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre to discuss the four alternatives of proposed route alignments.

The Ministry of Communication expects to sign the concession agreement on the project by this December and complete the first phase of work (Shahjalal International Airport-Sayedabad) by the end of 2013, said the minister.

The first phase of DEE, recommended by Strategic Transport Plan, will stretch over 22 kilometres of the 32.5km expressway project worth \$2 billion connecting Narayanganj and Joydevpur.

Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith, who was present at the workshop as the chief guest, said it would actually take a long time to

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

OnlinePoll ✓

In view of the proposed VAT, tax and proposals do you think implementation of the national budget will increase the cost of living?

Yes (93.90%)
No (3.90%)
No Comments (2.20%)

Total votes: 820

TODAY'S POLL

What should the government do to prevent deaths from landslides?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

Prayer Timing

June 18

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation