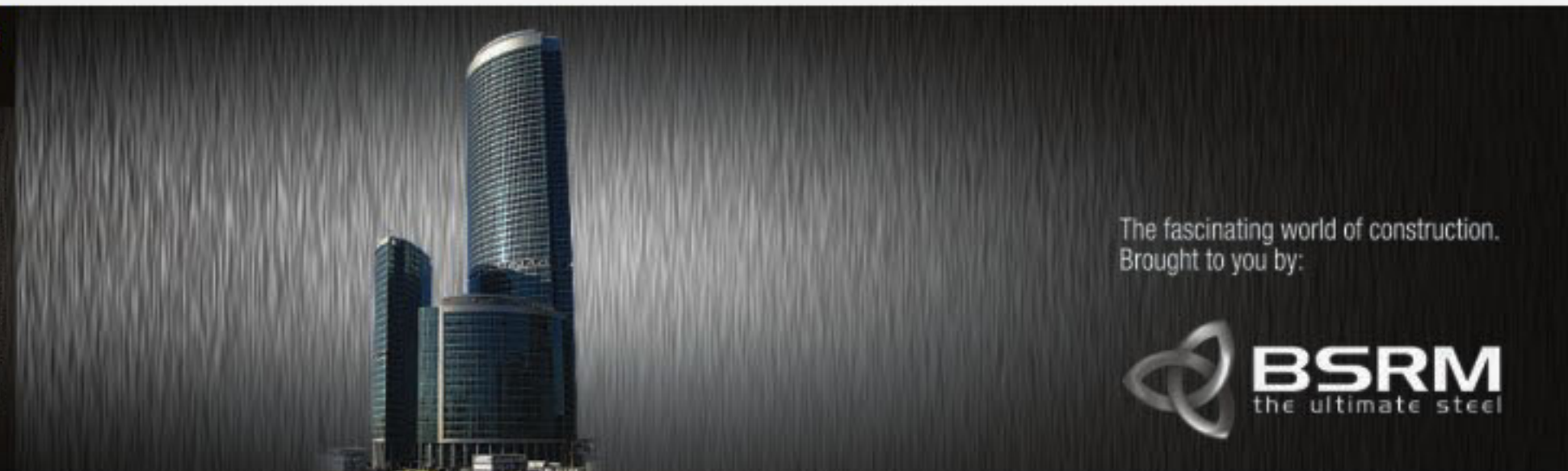


Did you know?

Naberezhnaya Tower is an office complex consisting of 3 individual office buildings connected to each other via a common basement. At 268.4 meters, this 59-story tower remained the tallest building in Europe, until the City of Capitals was completed in 2009.



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Ailing railway drops, delays trips daily

SHAHNAZ PARVEEN

"Two train journeys from Dhaka to Chittagong in July took me two hours more than scheduled in each instance," said a disheartened passenger Sultana Chowdhury, a resident of Baridhara in the city.

"For the third trip I was bound to choose the bus, although it cost me almost double," she added.

Years of neglect is now taking its toll on the Bangladesh Railway (BR) with 333 trips delayed and 54 cancelled only from Kamalapur Railway Station in June, sources at BR said.

Railway officials attributed the poor punctuality mainly to the appalling condition of locomotives, shortage of locomotive masters (train drivers) and stationmasters. Most of the locomotives are long past their economic lives.

"The condition is so bad that it is simply not possible to deliver punctuality anymore", said Mohammad Shahjahan, joint director general (operations) of BR.

The official informed that the railway

operates 265 trips daily across the country but only 223 engines are in running condition. About 50 percent of these engines are 40 years old.

"The current fleet is too old to show punctuality because they can no longer maintain schedule or speed," he pointed out, adding that frequent breakdowns sometimes push the number of operating engines below 200.

The official added that railway now has 698 posts of locomotive masters and 435 stationmasters vacant, which is more than half of its requirement.

"Sometimes engine is available but there is no driver to run it or there is no stationmaster available to give the go-ahead," said Shahjahan.

The official explained that train operation involves a diagram of sequencing engines and manpower usage. If one fails to perform, the rest in the same line is also affected.

Experts working on railway however identified negligence and lack of investment by successive governments as the main reasons behind this decline of

railway. They said the ultimate result of neglect is just becoming visible.

"All previous governments mainly focused on the development of road network and did not invest in railway when it was necessary. Now it is just falling apart", said Prof AMM Shafiqullah, vice chancellor of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET).

"It is established beyond doubt that railway is the most efficient mass transport system and because of Bangladesh's geographical layout and dense population, it is especially ideal for us," he noted.

"The main advantage of railway is that it can carry a huge number of passengers and big amount of goods, ten times more than a bus. It cuts down energy demand, pollution and average operational cost," the expert said.

"So it is time for the government to decide prudently on the fate of railway", he added.

BR considers a delay of up to 15 minutes as acceptable in punctuality. In 2009, only 73 percent trains were on time but

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EXTRA-JUDICIAL KILLING
1 every 3 days in last 9 months
Says Odhikar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers killed one person extra-judicially on an average in every three days during the last nine months, revealed Odhikar, a human rights organisation.

A report of the body published on Friday said at least 90 people allegedly faced extra-judicial deaths across the country during the period of January to September this year.

Based on the reports published in national dailies, it stated that among the victims, 40 were killed by Rab, 33 by police, eight persons by the joint team of Rab and police, five persons by the Rab-police-Coast Guard joint team, three by the Rab-Coast Guard joint team and one by BDR.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Sundarbans tigers smallest in world
Claims new study

UNB, Dhaka

The Sundarbans tigers may be the smallest tigers in the world, suggests a new study.

The study was carried out by the Sundarbans Tiger Project, a joint initiative between the Bangladesh Forest Department, Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh (WTB), Zoological Society of London and the University of Minnesota.

The research was funded by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Tiger and Rhino Fund.

There is only one species of tiger but scientists have split this into nine subspecies based on differences in their physical appearance and genetics, a release of the WTB said yesterday.

Tigers from the mangrove forest of the Sundarbans in Bangladesh and India are currently classified under the Bengal tiger sub species along with tigers across India, Nepal and Bhutan.

However, the tigers in the Sundarbans weigh just 76.7 kg, nearly half of the weight of other wild Bengal tigers, which average at 138.2 kg. This is also less than the average weight of tigers from any of the other 8 sub-species, making the Sundarbans tigers probably the smallest in the world.

Previously, it was believed that the Sumatran tiger was the smallest with an average weight of 86.7 kg. The reasons for the small size of Sundarbans are not known but the authors of the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



CNG pumps threaten strike from Nov 1
Demand lifting 6-hr shutdown order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The owners of CNG refuelling stations yesterday called a non-stop strike from November 1 unless the government order to keep their pumps closed for six hours every day is not withdrawn by October 31.

The decision came from an extraordinary general meeting of Bangladesh CNG Filling Station and Conversion Workshop Owners Association held at Officers' Club in Dhaka.

The association also placed six more demands from the meeting, presided over by its President Shafiqul Islam Kamal.

Vice President of the association Syed Sadat Ahmed, Secretary General Zakir Hossain Nayan, Treasurer

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

JMB's Dhaka chief held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka divisional chief and two ehshar (fulltime) members of outlawed militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) were arrested in Savar on the outskirts of the capital yesterday.

The militants were arrested with eight petrol bombs, 1.5 kilogram bomb-making materials, two identity cards and some tools, said Commander M Sohail, legal and media wing chief, Rapid Action Battalion.

The arrestees are Dhaka divisional chief Sharful Islam Likhon alias Rana, ehshar member Sahinul Islam alias Shahinul Alam alias Belal alias Shahin and gayeri ehshar (part-time) member Chainur Rahman.

Acting on an intelligence report, Rab personnel were waiting in Boilapur area and arrested the three around 2:00am, Sohail said. Sharful was made the chief of JMB Dhaka unit after the arrest of their chief Saidur Rahman a few months ago, he added.

Likhon was the Joypurhat district chief of JMB in 2004, he said. Sharful and his two siblings -- Mohammad Rabiul Islam alias Rabi and Jahangir Alam alias Liton -- were awarded life term imprisonment on charge of series bomb blast in Joypurhat on August 17, 2005.

Liton and Rabi are behind bars in Rangpur and Joypurhat, respectively.



Sharful Islam

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



Top, Indigo fields at Rajendrapur in Rangpur. A number of farmers in the area are cultivating the plant and producing dye from it. Bottom left, Colouring cloths with the dye what the farmers call True Bengal Natural Indigo Dye. Bottom right, Women at Nijera Cottage and Village Industries are stitching dyed cloths. The photos were taken at the end of last year.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Indigo back to Bengal

Colours dreams of farmers this time

RAFIQUE SARKER, Rangpur

Long gone are the days when the farmers refused to sow a single seedling of indigo plant and faced oppression from the British rulers.

Farming indigo has now turned into a blessing, a way to change socio-economic status of hundreds of farmers in Rangpur.

Farmers of Rajendrapur of Sadar upazila are cultivating indigo and producing a dye from it, which they call 'True Bengal Natural Indigo Dye'.

Punni Rani, an indigo farmer from Kumarpara, said, "I am a divorcee. Now I am leading a happy life with my daughter and two sons. Two years ago we couldn't make sure even two meals a day." Punni sold indigo leaves worth Tk 3,000 two months ago.

"I earned Tk 10,000 by selling indigo leaves to the company. Besides, I made Tk 5,000 from selling indigo sticks," said Jagadish Chandra Barmon, a

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Hajj pilgrim killed in road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman got killed when a rickshaw was hit by a pick-up van on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway in the capital's Jatrabari area early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Hasina Begum, 45, wife of Habibur Rahman of Muslim Nagar in Matuail in the city.

Sub-Inspector Mazhar of Jatrabari Police Station said the couple was going to Jatrabari in a rickshaw for their medical check up for going on hajj pilgrimage this year.

When they came near Matuail Matri Sadan, a pick-up van hit their rickshaw from behind at around 7:00am.

The couple was thrown off the rickshaw and Hasina was seriously injured. She was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared her dead.

Police arrested the van driver Dulal and seized the van.

Prayer Timing		
October 3		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-20
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-53	5-56
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

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Triple murder for property

Nephew, 2 hired goons carried out the crime

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatrabari triple murder was committed by the victims' relative Sumon and two of his associates in a bid to grab family property, disclosed Sumon to investigators.

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Sumon on a three-day remand.

Deputy Commissioner Taufiq Mahmud of DMP Wari Zone told The Daily Star that victim Mizanur Rahman's nephew Sumon confessed that he and two of his accomplices killed the victims with Mizanur's firearm, which they later took away. Sumon also disclosed one of his associates' names, the DC added.

Police kept the associate's name undisclosed. They, however,

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

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বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক

জিডি-৪১৯০

OnlinePoll ✓

The NBR has extended the income tax submission deadline to October 7. Do you think it will help boost tax collection?

Yes (58.5%) No (39.6%)
 No Comments (1.9%)

Total votes: 260

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think BNP's decision to focus on anti-Indian issues during its 2-month campaign against the government will benefit the opposition?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

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