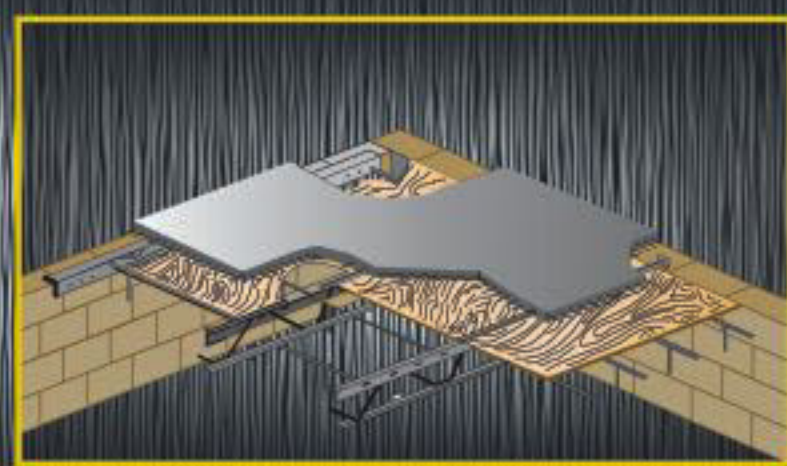


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KARNAPHULI TUNNEL

Ecneec to okay project today

Estimated cost Tk 8,447cr

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Construction cost of a two-lane tunnel under the Karnaphuli river has been estimated at Tk 8,447 crore, 57 percent of which will come from the Chinese Exim Bank.

The project proposal is scheduled to be placed at today's meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC), setting a deadline of 2020.

According to the proposal, the 3.4-kilometre two-lane tunnel will be built under the river in Chittagong.

The tunnel, which will be the first-of-its-kind in Bangladesh, would improve the Dhaka-Chittagong-Cox's Bazar road network. It can later be linked to the planned Asian Highway network, enabling road links with Myanmar and India.

The tunnel would also attract population in the east side and promote "One City and Two Towns" development model adopted by Shanghai, the largest city in China.

The tunnel would significantly facilitate transit traffic, relieve the existing bridges of traffic pressure and promote regional economic growth, according to a government study.

It would also provide convenient transport conditions for the planned deep seaport.

Besides the tunnel, the project has a 4.89-km approach road and an 800-metre bridge for construction.

Apart from these, 62.82 hectares of land would be acquired for the project.

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Belgian soldiers and police patrol central Brussels yesterday as police searched the area during high level of security following the recent deadly Paris attacks.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Brussels extends lockdown

Police arrest 21 in anti-terror raids

AFP, Brussels

Europe's capital Brussels was locked down for a third day under maximum terror alert yesterday, with schools and the metro closed after Belgian police raids failed to track down key Paris attacks suspect Salah Abdeslam.

Police arrested five more people in a new series of anti-terrorism raids yesterday.

The arrests bring to 21 the total number of people detained since police launched the security operation on Sunday night, with 16 people having been taken into custody earlier.

"Following the operation of last night, five more house searches were conducted in the Brussels region and two more in the Liege region. Five persons were arrested during these searches," the federal prosecutor's office said in a statement.

"A total of 21 persons were arrested. They are currently questioned by the police."

Around 26,000 euros (\$27,500) in cash was seized during one of the

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ACC drops graft charge against Bodi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has dropped a graft charge against



Awami League lawmaker Abdur Rahman Bodi as it failed to obtain relevant documents.

More than 10 years ago when Bodi was mayor of Teknaf municipality, he and two others were accused of corruption in awarding revenue and

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ICAO DEADLINE ENDS TODAY

Govt unsure how many expatriates without MRPs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Civil Aviation Organisation's deadline for terminating the use of hand-written passports expires today but the Bangladesh government does not seem to know how many of its expatriates were yet to receive Machine Readable Passport (MRPs).

Over 11 lakh Bangladeshi expatriates were yet to get the MRPs, Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali had told parliament on Thursday. But, the Department of Immigration and Passport (DIP) Director General NM Zeaul Alam yesterday told reporters that only 2 to 2.5 lakh expatriates do not have MRPs.

"We cannot explain why the figure would be 11 lakh as we do not have

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62 charged with double murder in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police yesterday pressed charges against 62 people over a double murder in the city's CRB area in 2013.

The accused include former Jubo League central leader Helal Akbar Chowdhury Babar, former Chhatra League central leader Saiful Islam Limon and the BCL's Chittagong University unit president Alamgir Tipu.

Inspector Atik Ahmed Chowdhury of the Detective Branch of Chittagong Metropolitan Police submitted the charge sheet to a local court around 4:30pm, sources said.

Atik, also the investigation officer of the

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Indian police regret raid on cow art

BBC ONLINE

Police in India's Rajasthan state have apologised to artists for raiding an exhibition featuring a polystyrene cow dangling from a helium balloon.

Officers arrived at the Jaipur Art Summit on Saturday following complaints that the life-size cow floating in the air was offensive to Hindus.

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A woman from the former enclave of Coathbhajini in Debiganj of Panchagarh bids a tearful goodbye to her relatives at Gajakathi High School ground in Debiganj. A second batch of 147 people of 28 families from two erstwhile enclaves in the district left for India yesterday.

PHOTO: MD QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT

MOJAHEED, SALAUDDIN Turkey saddened by executions

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The Turkish government has said it felt "sorry" for the executions of Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mojaheed and Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, and called for "social reconciliation".

"We have learned with sadness that the death sentences given to Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mujaheed, Secretary General of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami Party, and Salauddin

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Stranded migrants block railway, call hunger strike

REUTERS, Domeni

Moroccans, Iranians and Pakistanis on Greece's northern border with Macedonia blocked rail traffic and demanded passage to western Europe yesterday, stranded by a policy of filtering migrants in the Balkans that has raised human rights concerns.

One Iranian man, declaring a hunger strike, stripped to the waist, sewed his lips together with nylon and sat down in front of lines of Macedonian riot police.

Asked by Reuters where he wanted to go, the man, a 34-year-old electrical engineer named Hamid, said: "To any free country in the world. I cannot go back. I will be hanged."

Hundreds of thousands of migrants, many of them Syrians fleeing war, have made the trek across the Balkan peninsula having arrived by boat and dinghy to Greece from Turkey, heading for the more affluent countries of northern and western

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