

Rajshahi city to get flyover for first time

BSS, Rajshahi

Rajshahi City Corporation is going to construct a flyover for the first time in the city for improving its traffic system.

It will be constructed at Budhpara railway crossing with an estimated cost of around Tk 29.29 crore under the Tk 182.68 crore Rajshahi-Naogaon-Natore four-lane road construction project.

RCC authorities revealed this while signing contracts with two construction firms at the City Bhaban on Thursday. Under the contracts, the road and flyover will be constructed simultaneously. Superintendent Engineer Khandakar Khairul Bashar signed the contracts on behalf of the city corporation while Towhid Al Masud and Khorshed Alam on behalf of their respective firms.

City Mayor Mosaddique Hossain Bulbul addressed the signing ceremony as the chief guest with Chief Executive Officer Shah Mumin in the chair.

HC set to hear petition on CJ post vacancy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court is scheduled to hear tomorrow a writ petition that challenged the legality of keeping the post of chief justice vacant and not appointing a successor to former chief justice Surendra Kumar Sinha.

The bench of Justice Zinat Ara and Justice Kazi Md Ejarul Haque Akondo on January 18 fixed Sunday for hearing the petition, as four separate HC benches had earlier refused to deal with the same petition, writ petitioner Advocate Eunus Ali Akond told The Daily Star yesterday.

He also said the HC benches did not mention any specific reason behind their refusal to hear the petition.

Advocate Eunus submitted the writ petition as public interest litigation to the HC on January 3, seeking an HC rule asking the respondents to explain why their action of keeping the post vacant and not appointing a new chief justice should not be declared illegal.

Secretaries to the cabinet division, president's office, law ministry, prime minister's principal secretary and registrar general of the Supreme Court were cited as respondents in the petition.

Quoting from the petition, Eunus said the post of chief justice cannot be kept vacant even for a day under the constitution, but the respondents have not appointed a new chief justice after Justice SK Sinha resigned on November 10 last year.

In the petition, Eunus also prayed that the HC orders the respondents to appoint him the chief justice until disposal of the rule.

Justice Md Abdul Wahhab Miah of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court has been discharging the duties of chief justice since October 3 last year, when then chief justice SK Sinha went on leave before finally stepping down.

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Preparations for setting up book stalls ongoing on the Suhrawardy Udayan premises in Dhaka yesterday ahead of Amar Ekushey Granthamela, the largest book fair in the country, to be held throughout the month of February.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

LPG PRICING

Amid policy vacuum, people paying extra

UNB, Dhaka

It has been three years since the government decided to set the LPG (liquid petroleum gas) pricing, but the effort remained futile due to influences of some vested interest groups.

As a result, consumers are paying more for LPG cylinders with no policy whatsoever in place.

The move was initiated by the Energy Division to formulate a LPG pricing policy to reduce the price.

But each LPG cylinder (12.5kg) is now being sold in the local market at Tk 1,100-1,200 whereas, a committee of the government's Energy Division had calculated that the price should not cross Tk 730.

Three years back, the Energy Division moved to formulate the LPG pricing policy as per the government's order. The government was trying to promote LPG as cooking gas replacing piped natural gas, distributed by the state-owned Titas and other gas companies.

Identifying high market price of LPG as a barrier to its promotion, the Energy Division held a stakeholders' meeting with the participation of the LPG marketing companies.

Taking their opinion into consideration, it formed a committee to draft a formula to fix the pricing at the retail market.

The committee, headed by the then additional secretary Kazi Zebunnesa Begum, found that after all the expenses a 12.5kg LPG cylinder should not be sold at above Tk 703.

The committee, comprising representations from public and private sectors, made a recommendation to introduce labelling of maximum retail price (MRP) on the cylinders and make it mandatory for traders to sell it at the fixed rate.

"But some... blocked the move by their influence on the political level," said a senior official at the Energy Division preferring anonymity. Also, the recommendation of fixing the price could not be implemented due to opposition from some major companies.

A good number of companies, including two from the public sector, are operating in the LPG business in the country. The major private operators are Omera, Bashundhara, Beiximco, Total Gaz, Klean Heat, Jamuna, Orion, Bin Habib and Super Gas (TK Gas).

Disagreeing with the concept of fixing the price, Jakarta Jalal, general manager (strategic planning) of Bashundhara LPG, said it would be unrealistic to fix the LPG price for retail market as the price of the product is linked with the oil price in global market, where it fluctuates all the time.

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Save the birds

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he added.

In this regard, JU Vice Chancellor Prof Farzana Islam, who inaugurated the event, said, "We have a large plan to build the infrastructural development while we are trying to save the bird sanctuary."

At the fair, a debate contest, photography exhibition and quiz competition on birds and a prize giving ceremony were also held on the sidelines.

The zoology department of JU in association with Wildlife Rescue Centre, Bangladesh Bird Club, Aranayak Foundation, Channel 24, IUCN and Bangladesh Forest Department organised the fair.

The event has been going on since 2001.

Meanwhile, three journalists were presented with "Conservation Media Award 2018" for their reports on conservation of JU biodiversity in print, online and electronic media categories.

The Daily Star JU Correspondent Md Asaduzzaman won the award in the print category for his report headlined, "Beautiful lakes, ugly behaviour", which was published on January 6 last year.

Two other journalists - Nur Alam Himel of banglanews24.com and Touba Khan Tamim of Somoy TV - got the award in online and electronic media categories.

[Our JU correspondent



People under the banner of "Jessore Roadey Gachh Rakkhar Nagorik Brindo" in a human chain in the capital's Shahbagh yesterday demand cancellation of a government decision to fell century-old trees along the Jessore-Benapole road.

PHOTO: STAR

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NEWS IN brief

Padma Bridge to be completed by December: Quader

UNB, Sangsab Bhaban

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader on Thursday told the parliament that the construction of Padma Bridge is expected to be completed by December 2018.

"Efforts are on to complete the bridge by December 2018 through installation of the remaining spans in phases alongside pile driving and installation of pair columns," Quader said in response to a starred question from Awami League lawmaker Salina Begum (Reserved seat-6).

Fifty percent of the overall physical progress of the project is done. One span (superstructure) of the bridge has already been installed while another will be installed this month, he added.

Wild elephants kill Rohingya

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A Rohingya refugee was killed in an attack by two wild elephants in Ukhia upazila of Cox's Bazar yesterday morning.

The deceased is Yakub Ali, 45. Five other Rohingyas were injured and six tents were destroyed at the Modhurchora Rohingya camp in Balukhali area, said police.

The injured were admitted to the upazila health complex.

Child bride found dead in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A child bride was found hanging in her Dumain house in Madhukhali upazila of Faridpur early yesterday.

The deceased, Marufa Begum, 15, was married off to Saiful Islam, 22, just four months ago. It was difficult for her mother to raise her daughter alone after her husband Jafor Sheikh had died.

Dipali Begum found her daughter hanging with a scarf hours after Marufa and Saiful went to sleep.

Meanwhile, the villagers handed Saiful of Arpara village over to police when he tried to flee.

Two robbers held with 30 gold bars in Jhenidah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Police arrested two robbers with 30 gold bars, which they earlier looted from smugglers, at Kotchandpur in Mosheshpur upazila of Jhenidah early yesterday.

On January 4 night, Harunur Rashid Milon, 28, of Kotchandpur Adarshapara, and Asraful Alam alias Potla, 47, of Post Office area, looted 47 gold bars from two passengers, who were travelling in the same bus, at gunpoint when the vehicle reached Sundarpur.

The bars, worth Tk 1.3 crore, were being smuggled to India, police said.

Police are trying to recover the other bars.

Youth held with arms, ammo

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested a youth with a foreign pistol, two bullets and a magazine in Mymensingh town's Charpara area early yesterday.

On a tip-off, detectives raided the area and arrested Gopal, 26, son of Monto of town's Banshbari Colony area. Gopal was being interrogated at the DB office till filing of this report at 8:00pm.

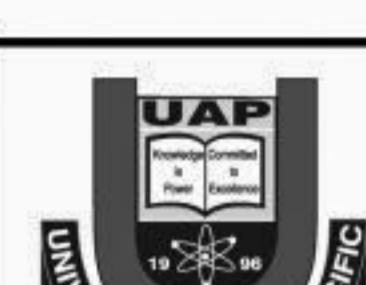
Why cultural events

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The minister on that day announced that only three programmes -- Pahela Baishakh, Rabindra Jayanti, and Nazrul Jayanti -- will be allowed on the spot.

However, no formal declaration has yet been made neither any notice has been issued regarding the decision. But, the authorities concerned have stopped giving permission to hold cultural programmes there.

The DC Hill has a long tradition of holding cultural programmes as it is located in the centre of the city and has an open stage.



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