

## Japan eyes big projects

*A dozen Japanese firms show interest in 8 projects including 2nd Padma bridge, 2nd metro rail under G2G initiative*

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Under a new government-to-government initiative, more than a dozen Japanese companies have shown interest in investing in eight infrastructure projects, including a second Padma bridge and another metro rail.

More than one Japanese company has expressed interest in each project and sought detailed information on those, said several officials of Bangladesh's Public Private Partnership Authority (PPPA).

On February 7, the PPPA, which represents Bangladesh in the process, held a meeting with different agencies involved in the projects and asked their officials to provide it with the maps and other particulars of the projects within two weeks, they said.

"In the first phase, the process of implementing three to four projects will start by this year. We have got very positive response from the Japanese companies," said a high official of the PPPA, seeking anonymity.

"The projects to be implemented in the first phase will be selected at a government-level meeting in Japan in May or June," said the official.

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The Bangladesh team were left to reflect upon a month of sub-par cricket after Sri Lanka concluded a dominant tour by winning the second T20I by 75 runs at the Sylhet International Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



## Lanka sweep abject Tigers

AL-AMIN from Sylhet

Is there anyone interested to know the details of the mismatch at the Sylhet International Stadium yesterday that Sri Lanka won by a massive 75 runs against a hopelessly out-of-sorts Bangladesh? Not really. Most of the passionate cricket followers in this part of the world were not even bothered to watch the full length of the game that was telecast live.

For those who stayed tuned till Danushka Gunathilaka had Abu Jayed stumped to take the last Bangladesh wicket at 135 in 18.4 overs, they would have definitely felt one last pinch to a deep wound that will last a long time. Gunathilaka did a snake dance mocking Bangladesh

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## SI breaches security at Dhaka airport

*He boards int'l flight without travel docs*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A police sub-inspector in uniform boarded a Bangkok-bound flight without any travel documents at Hazrat Shahjalal

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## Correction

In our story headlined "State Banks: Plundering made easy" published yesterday, it was wrongly stated the government announced Tk 2-crore recapitalisation for state-run banks seven months ago. The correct figure is Tk 2,000 crore. We regret the editing error.

## Bribery in police force must stop

*A senior official tells police conference*

SHARIFUL ISLAM and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Senior police officials must stop taking bribes over posting of officers-in-charge and sub-inspectors to stop corruption in the force, a deputy commissioner of DMP told a quarterly police conference yesterday.

"An OC has to pay a bribe of Tk 30 lakh to Tk 1.5 crore for his posting. A sub-inspector needs to pay lakhs of taka for transfer," Biplob Kumar Sarkar, DC of Tejgaon division of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said at the conference, held at the Police Headquarters.

He came up with the remarks as the new IGP wanted to know from the senior officials their views on reports of anomalies in constable recruitment and police involvement in drug trading, according to participants in the conference.

"Sir, please instruct DIG (deputy inspector general) sirs not to take bribe over posting of inspectors as OCs," he said drawing attention of Inspector General of Police

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## SAFETY MEASURES AT SHAHJALAL AIRPORT

## UK for three joint assessments a year

*Lifts ban on direct cargo flights to London*

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA and RASHIDUL HASAN

The UK government has fully withdrawn the two-year-long ban on direct cargo flights from Dhaka to London, as the British government is satisfied with the improvement of safety and security measures at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA).

AKM Shahjahan Kamal, civil aviation and tourism minister, and Alison Blake, the British high commissioner in Bangladesh, announced the decision at a press conference at the country's premier airport in Dhaka yesterday.

The decision took effect immediately, meaning all cargo flights from Dhaka can

now fly directly to the UK.

But the UK transport department recommended that the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh recruit joint security experts, follow international standards and do periodic safety assessments.

Bangladesh will have to complete three joint safety assessments in a year for uninterrupted flights between Dhaka and London.

However, for the continuation of cargo flights into any European Union country from a third country airport, the national flag carrier must obtain the mandatory certificate called ACC3.

AM Mosaddique Ahmed, managing director of Biman, told The Daily Star that

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## BNP moves to unite grassroots

*Central leaders start visiting districts tomorrow*

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The BNP central leaders will start grassroots tour tomorrow and hold a series of meetings in efforts to keep intact the organisational unity as they fear the government is out to split the party ahead of the next parliamentary election.

They will sit with the district and upazila units to ask party men to keep unity at any cost and not to make any reckless decisions, engage in violence and fall into government's trap, said insiders.

The central leaders will also talk to the relatives of the party members now behind bars and will discuss the legal issues.

A number of party leaders said they will also ask the grassroots to counter the government campaign to portray the Zia family as corrupt people.

Already, some of the central leaders have gone to some districts while the rest will join the party's demonstrations

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A policeman grabs a BNP activist by the collar in front of the Dhaka Deputy Commissioner's office yesterday morning. A group of activists was going to submit a memorandum to the DC demanding release of the party Chairperson Khaleda Zia, but police dispersed them.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Iran plane crash kills 66

AFP, Tehran

All 66 people on board an Iranian passenger plane were feared dead after it crashed into the country's Zagros mountains yesterday, with emergency services struggling to locate the wreckage in blizzard conditions.

Aseman Airlines flight EP3704 disappeared from radar around 45 minutes after takeoff from Tehran's Mehrabad airport, the airline's public relations chief Mohammad Tabatabai told state broadcaster IRIB.

It was the third disaster to strike Iran in recent months, after an earthquake that killed at least 620 people in Kermanshah in November and 30 Iranian sailors were lost in an oil tanker

collision off China's coast last month.

The ATR-72 twin-engine plane, in service for 25 years, left the capital at around 8:00 am and was heading towards the city of Yasuj, some 500 kilometres to the south.

After conflicting reports on fatalities and the location of the crash, officials said rescue teams were still not able to find the wreckage.

"We still have no access to the spot of the crash and therefore we cannot accurately and definitely confirm the death of all passengers," Tabatabai told the ISNA news agency.

He said the plane was carrying 60 passengers, including one child, as well as six crew.

Jalal Pooranfar, regional head for

Iran's emergency services, told the ISNA news agency that rescue and relief teams had been sent to the possible area of the crash.

"But the helicopter could not continue its path due to snow and blizzard," he said.

Sayed Noor Mohammad Mousavi, head of the local Red Crescent office, told the IRNA news agency a drone had been dispatched to help find the wreckage.

A total of 120 people from 30 different emergency teams were sent to help with the search, another Red Crescent official said.

Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei sent a message of condolence,

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