

বিশ্ব বলেছিলো- পদ্মা সেতু 'সম্ভব না' একজন প্রধানমন্ত্রী আর ১৬ কোটি বাঙালি বলেছিলো- 'কেন না!'

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# Anti-graft body smells RHD rats

*Sends letter with 21 recommendations to prevent institutional corruption that leads to sub-standard roads*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has found a number of engineers and other officials of Roads and Highways Department building sub-standard roads to misappropriate public money.

They act in collusion with influential persons and contractors to violate the terms of tender.

Listing the stages of road construction where corruption often takes place, the anti-graft watchdog recently sent a letter with 21 recommendations to the secretary of cabinet division.

It also pointed out several irregularities in awarding tender even after the electronic system was introduced and observed that syndicates choosing contractors had become a norm, said an ACC official.

"There are allegations that a contractor has to pay influential persons, consultants and government officials to get a contract. Sometimes it becomes difficult for a contractor to strictly follow the specification and design of a project," he said.

Quoting the letter, an official said proving an allegation of corruption in road construction was difficult as the matters were technical and required immediate evaluation.

It added that burnt bricks, an important component of road construction, were often substituted with cheaper ones.

The commission recommended engaging an RHD engineer to examine the quality of bricks in laboratories before using them in road construction.

"If sub-standard brick is used even after that, the RHD engineer and contractor can be held liable" the official said.

It also recommended similar measures to check the width of roads and the quality of sand used in constructions.

Forming a monitoring committee with BUET teachers, civil society members, road experts and honest engineers of RHD to look after the matters

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Nguyen Thi Hien, wife of Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang, left, receives a bouquet as President Abdul Hamid and his wife Rashida Khanam look on. The couples met on the tarmac of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday as the Vietnamese president arrived on a three-day state visit.

PHOTO: PID

# LEATHER SECTOR Vietnam set to invest \$100m

STAR REPORT

A Vietnamese company is set to invest around \$100 million in Bangladesh's leather sector.

The company is eyeing duty benefits Bangladesh enjoys on exports to the European Union, Japan, Canada, Australia and several other developed countries, said industry insiders.

An agreement between the Leather Goods and Footwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association of Bangladesh (LFMEAB) and Vietnam Leather, Footwear and Handbag Association would be signed today, they added.

LFMEAB will help the Vietnamese company set up a factory on the outskirts of Dhaka or Chittagong and maintain liaison with the government, said the association President Saiful Islam.

He, however, did not mention the name of the Vietnamese company.

"The company is coming to Bangladesh mainly to avail the duty benefits on shipments from here."

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# US wants to see inclusive elections

*Says Trump aide Lisa Curtis*

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

As the US put emphasis on a participatory general election, Dhaka yesterday assured Washington that the polls will be free, fair, and inclusive.

Deputy Assistant to the US President and Senior Director for South and Central Asia at the National Security Council Lisa Curtis raised the issue during her discussions with high government officials yesterday.

Following a query from Curtis, Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali said Bangladesh is committed to a free, fair and participatory election and that observers from different

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# Tripura to get BJP CM on March 8

*Non-Congress parties come together to stake claim in Meghalaya*

THE HINDU, Agencies

Manik Sarkar resigned as chief minister of Tripura yesterday after his leftist party suffered a humiliating defeat by Bharatiya Janata Party ending a long leftist rule in the Northeastern Indian state.

State BJP president Biplab Kumar Deb, frontrunner for chief minister, said the swearing-in would be on March 8, two days after party heavyweights converge to elect the legislature party leader.

BJP leaders said Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who had during the campaign hoped to witness Tripura turning saffron from red, is expected to attend the oath-taking ceremony.

The BJP won 35 of the 59 seats where elections were held on February 18. Its ally, the Indigenous People's Front of Twipra



Biplab Kumar Deb

(IPFT) won eight seats taking the tally to 43. The CPI(M), which had won 49 seats in 2013, had to be satisfied with 16.

BJP's strong showing in Tripura has come as a surprise for many as the party had secured less than 2 percent votes in the 2013 assembly elections.

A look at the vote shares reveals that while the Left has lost 7 percent vote share in the state. But Congress's pathetic performance in the state helped BJP to secure a massive win. Its vote share dropped from 36.5 percent in 2013 to a minuscule 1.9 percent in 2018.

Sarkar, who reigned as the chief minister for 20 of the Left Front's 25 years in power in Tripura since 1993, met Governor Tathagata Roy in the afternoon to tender his resignation.

The governor accepted Sarkar's resignation,

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# 1,010 Qawmi graduates to join govt jobs

BSS, Dhaka

Some 1,010 Qawmi madrasa graduates will join government service for the first time today as the Qawmi madrasa certificates got the government recognition.

According to an Islamic Foundation release yesterday, they will join as teachers of the Qawmi Faculty at Darul Arkam Ibtedaye Madrasa under a project titled "Mosque-Based Children and Mass Education Programme (6th phase)" being implemented by the foundation.

After joining, a three-day orientation programme will be held for them.

Religious Affairs Minister Principal Matior Rahman will inaugurate the

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# Dubai begins testing self-driving pods



REUTERS, Dubai

Dubai has begun testing autonomous pods in a trial run the Gulf's trade and tourism hub hopes will help its transformation into one of the smartest cities in the world.

Officials from Dubai's Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) displayed two cube-shaped vehicles built by US-based Next Future Transportation company in Italy as they spun around on a main street in Dubai.

Passersby stopped to try out the six-seat vehicles and question the Italian engineers overseeing the test. RTA officials said they have allocated 1.5 million dirhams (\$410,000) for further research and development of the driverless vehicles, which Dubai hopes to use for local transportation under the city's 2030 Dubai Future Accelerators, which aims to make 25 percent of daily transportation self-driven.

"The goal is to develop these two research vehicles," Khaled al-Awadhi, director of Automated Collection Systems at the RTA, said.

"These tests are aimed at developing the performance of these vehicles," he added, without giving details on the cost of the project.

He said several projects were being developed, including self-driving buses and a marine transportation system.

The RTA says the autonomous pods would travel

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# Tigers in SL to turn the tide around

STAR SPORT DESK

Having endured a torrid string of losses to Sri Lanka at home in the first two months of the year, the Bangladesh cricket team reached Sri Lanka yesterday in the hope that the third month will bring better returns. A new month, however, does not improve the Tigers' chances because they are in Colombo to play a T20I tri-series that involves a confident home team and a mighty India side, against whom Bangladesh will play their first match on March 8.

The tri-series will kick off tomorrow with India taking on Sri Lanka at the R Premadasa Stadium, the venue for all of the matches of the tournament.

Mahmudullah Riyad will lead the team in the possibly crippling absence of Shakib Al Hasan, who was ruled out

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

# Pineapples in March

*Rangamati farmers benefit from early harvest*

ANVIL CHAKMA with ANDREW EAGLE

Usually associated with the monsoon months, the sweet taste of pineapple has arrived early in Rangamati. The district's pineapple farmers are currently busy harvesting, enjoying the additional income benefits of selling the fruit out of season.

"A pair of large-sized pineapples sells for as much as Tk 50," says grower Banarupa Samataghat, at the weekly college gate fruit market in the town.

"From my two-acre pineapple plot I have already earned Tk 80,000 this year," says Sattyajit Bikash Chakma, 35, from Bogachhari in Naniarchar upazila. "Last week I sold them for about Tk 40 per pair."

Another farmer Sudip Chakma, 42, also from Naniarchar, is likewise pleased with this year's harvest. "Last year I grew 10,000 pineapples on two acres," he says. "This year's production will exceed that."

Rajes Kumar Chakma, from the Rajbari area, meanwhile, is one satisfied customer. "I bought pineapples the other day and they're really tasty."

The Department of Agricultural Extension reports that around



A farmer shows pineapples at his orchard in Raamhori Para under Naniarchar upazila of Rangamati. The sweet taste of monsoon arrived early in the region this year. Growers used hormones, which are said to be harmless, to ripen the fruits faster.

PHOTO: ANVIL CHAKMA

1,797 hectares has been planted with pineapples in the district this year. The total harvest should top 50,000 tonnes.

As could be anticipated, fruit traders from the lucrative Dhaka

and Chittagong markets are lining up for a piece of the action. "I go to as many weekly fruit markets in the Hill Districts as I can," says one Chittagong trader, Muhammad Kamal Hossain.

"There is always solid demand for Hill Tracts fruit in Dhaka and Chittagong," says another trader, Md Arsad Ali. "Fruit from this region is renowned for its taste."

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ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন, ঢাকা (সম্পত্তি বিভাগ)

উন্নয়নের গণতন্ত্র শেখ হাসিনার মূলমন্ত্র

## গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সর্বসাধারণের সদয় অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, ইস্টার্ন হাউজিং লিমিটেড এর জহুরুল ইসলাম সিটি (বনশ্রী নিউটাউন) আবাসিক প্রকল্পের দক্ষিণ বনশ্রী অংশের "K" ও "L" ০২টি ব্লকের মোট ১৯টি রাস্তা যথাক্রমে ব্লক "L" এর রাস্তা নং- ০৭, ০৮, ০৯, ১০, ১১, ১২, ১৩ এবং ব্লক "K" এর রাস্তা নং- ১৪, ১৫, ১৬, ১৭, ১৮, ১৯, ২০, ১৪/০১, ১৪/০২, ১৪/০৩, ১৪/০৪, ১৪/০৫ ঢাকা সিটি জরিপের ৩৪টি দাগের অংশে ২৩১৪৫০ বর্গফুট বা ৫.৩১ একর রাস্তার ভূমি জনস্বার্থে ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন, ঢাকা এর অনুকূলে গ্রহণ করা হলো।

মোহাম্মদ কামরুল ইসলাম চৌধুরী (উপ-সচিব)

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প্রধান সম্পত্তি কর্মকর্তা ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন, ঢাকা

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