

Bangladesh discovers first magnetite iron mine in Dinajpur

BSS, Dinajpur

The Geological Survey of Bangladesh (GSB) today announced that they discovered the country's first magnetic mine or iron ore at Dinajpur's Hakimpur upazila.

"A 400-foot thick iron layer has been discovered at a depth of 1,330 feet and the layer stretches over an area of 6-10 square kilometers," GSB's Deputy Director Mohammad Masum said while making the ground breaking announcement at a press conference in the north-western district.

He added, "The discovery of the iron mine is a first in Bangladesh." Masum said the deposit was found at Isabpur village in Hakimpur and the ore contained higher iron contents compared to most other such mines across the globe.

He said the percentage of iron in the mine was 60, while in most other mines elsewhere in the world it is below 50.

The geologist said the Hakimpur mine also appeared to be a source of copper, nickel, chromium and limestone at a depth of 1,150 feet.

Geology literatures suggest the typical grade of iron at which a magnetite-bearing banded iron formation becomes economic is roughly 25 percent.

Masum said the GSB detected the existence of mineral substances while drilling a well at Mushidpur, about 3 kilometers east of Isabpur village, in 2013, and six years later they started digging at Isabpur village on April 19.

"As we drilled 1,380-1,750 feet beneath the surface, we saw a ray of hope and [eventually] made the [initial] announcement," he said.

GSB Director General Zillur Rahman Chowdhury was not available for comments immediately as he is on tour abroad, but officials said he and some senior officials visited the site on May 26.

The GSB started drilling the well after taking 50 decimals of land on lease for four months at Tk 45,000 from farmer Ishaque Ali of Isabpur village, 11 kilometers from the upazila headquarters.

"We started drilling the well on April 19 last and a 30-member team of experts conducted the drilling work in three shifts," said another GSB Deputy Director M Masud Rana at the press conference.

Geologists said currently only five countries -- Brazil, the United States, Canada, Sweden and Australia -- mine the magnetite iron ore.



Vehicles and rickshaws make U-turns through a gap in the median strip on Dhaka-Chattogram highway in the capital's Matuail area yesterday. Locals created the gap by breaking part of the median strip to go to nearby lanes and by-lanes. This illegal activity slows down the traffic on the busy highway and also posing risk of accidents.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Confident Tigers

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Mahmudullah Riyad all had their families with them as they boarded the bus with smiles on their faces. Tamim Iqbal also cut a happy figure as the opener had found some form and was looking dangerous against West Indies. However, one suspects that Tamim -- who puts immense pressure on himself to perform -- would have been even happier if his innings was not cut short on a 53-ball 48 by a phenomenal piece of fielding from Sheldon Cottrell, who ran the batsman out after fielding off his own bowling.

After two losses, two wins and a washout, fifth-placed Bangladesh now need to win three of their next four matches to stand a realistic chance of making the semifinals. Although the

road is still a tough one, the Tigers will go to Nottingham knowing that this group of players had answered most questions presented to them. Along with Tamim regaining some confidence, skipper Mashrafe also silenced critics by being the most economical bowler on display, conceding at 4.62 per over even as West Indies ran up a big total. They also have a new performer in Liton, and if he continues in a similar vein at number five, Bangladesh's top six will be a complete one.

Although Bangladesh have never beaten Australia in a World Cup match -- they had never beaten West Indies either -- the Tigers reached Nottingham yesterday evening confident in the knowledge that they have most areas covered for the coming challenges.

Seize, destroy all expired drugs

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Talking to The Daily Star, the writ petitioner said the health secretary, the DGDA, the DNCRP and the DGHS were asked to comply with the order and submit reports to the HC by July 16.

The court also issued a rule, asking the authorities to explain in four weeks why their inaction to confiscate expired medicines from pharmacies should not be declared illegal.

The respondents to the rule are secretaries to the ministries of health, home, law and industries, the director general of the DGHS, the director general and a deputy director of the DNCRP, the inspector general of police, and the president and the general secretary of Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries.

Besides, the editors of The Daily Star and the Prothom Alo have been asked to submit separate reports to the HC by July 16, confirming the authenticity of the news reports published in their dailies on June 11.

According to the reports, the DNCRP found expired medicines in 93 percent of the pharmacies in the capital where it conducted drives over six months.

Earlier on June 15, Nazmul Hasan Papon, president of Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries, told the media that availability of expired medicines in the country's pharmacies is "not unusual" and that there is "no reason to be worried".

He could not confirm whether all the companies follow the standard procedures to destroy expired medicines safely.

COURT HEARING

The HC said both adulterated and expired medicines are being stored

and sold though there are multiple government agencies to prevent it.

It also mentioned that in some countries, only the health ministry looks into this issue.

Petitioner's counsel ABM Altaf Hossain told the court that the DNCRP recently said expired medicines are being sold, which is alarming for the nation.

He said it needs to be found out based on what the DNCRP had made such a statement.

At one stage, Altaf mentioned the recent incident involving an official of the national consumer rights body, who ran a drive at an outlet of local fashion brand Aarong.

He said the official was transferred soon after the drive.

In response, the court said, "Why will the prime minister need to give directives on everything? Are the secretaries now in their pockets? The transfer order was issued on a holiday."

"For what they are there if the prime minister has to intervene in every issue..."

"If such things continue to happen, honest officials will be demoralised... It was necessary to take steps against those who issued the transfer order on a holiday."

The court mentioned that the expiry dates of medicines are printed on packets in such small fonts that it is very difficult to read those.

"It seems microscopes are needed to see those [expiry dates]. Those should be clearly visible," it added.

Deputy Attorney General Abdulah-Al-Mahmud Bashar said the authorities are not sitting idle, and that they are taking steps to stop storing and sale of expired drugs.

Khaleda gets bail

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government about moving an appeal before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, challenging the HC's bail orders for Khaleda Zia.

AB Siddique, president of Bangladesh Jananetri Parishad, a pro-AL organisation, filed the cases against her on charges of hurting religious sentiments of Muslims and making derogatory comments on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

He filed one case with a Dhaka court on October 21, 2014, claiming that on October 14 of the same year, Khaleda at a programme at the Engineers Institution in Dhaka said "the ruling party's [AL] professed secularism was nothing but a sham". He said her remarks hurt the religious sentiments of Muslims.

He filed the other defamation case against Khaleda with another Dhaka court on January 25, 2017, claiming that she had made derogatory remarks on Sheikh Mujib.

Khaleda filed two bail petitions

with the HC on May 22.

She landed in jail on February 8 last year after being convicted in a corruption case involving the Zia Orphanage Trust, filed during the 2007-08 military-backed caretaker government rule.

A Dhaka court on October 29 last year sentenced her to seven years in jail in Zia Charitable Trust case filed with Tejgaon Police Station on August 8, 2011.

The HC on October 31 last year increased her jail sentence to 10 years in that case.

The HC on April 30 this year accepted the BNP chairperson's appeal to quash a trial court verdict that sentenced her to seven years in jail in Zia Charitable Trust case and ordered the lower court officials to submit the case documents before it in two months for examining.

AJ Mohammad Ali appeared in court for Khaleda while Deputy Attorney General Fazlur Rahman Khan opposed the bail petitions yesterday.

All 3 int'l airports to get more scanners

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(JICA) will bear 90 percent of the cost.

The project is scheduled for completion by June next year.

According to the planning ministry proposal, JICA has already surveyed the airports to identify necessary requirements.

The PM asked the authorities to keep dog squads at the airports to improve security, Planning Minister MA Mannan told journalists after the meeting.

On March 8, 2016, the UK government imposed a temporary ban on Dhaka-London direct air cargo after UK experts found serious security lapses and risks at the Dhaka airport during its inspections.

Following the ban, the government appointed an UK firm to ensure security and train staffers of the airport.

In 2016, the Ecneec had approved a Tk 89.55 crore project for purchasing security equipment for all the three international airports.

An official of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh yesterday said under that project, explosive detection systems, liquid explosive detection systems, dual view x-ray scanning machines, and under-vehicle scanning machines had been installed.

Following the steps, the UK

government fully withdrew the ban in February 2018.

Mostly apparel items, vegetables, and agricultural products go to London.

Yesterday, the Ecneec approved 11 projects, including the improvement of airport security, involving around Tk 8,053 crore.

While okaying the projects, Hasina gave several directives to the ministries concerned. She asked for formulation of a master plan to set up service centres/restaurants along highways across the country for transport workers.

A planning ministry official said if the plan was implemented, passengers and transport workers could rest there. This would help reduce occurrence of accidents, he added.

Hasina also asked the Local Government Division to formulate a master plan so that waste management system was implemented even at union levels.

The Ecneec approved another project to move chemical warehouses of Old Dhaka to Kathaldia in Gazipur's Tongi temporarily, as the long-time plan to set up a permanent hub would take time.

The project involves Tk 91.74 crore. According to the ministry proposal, licensed chemical traders would

be able to keep imported chemical products at the makeshift warehouses.

The project's design has already been completed and it is scheduled to be finished by June next year.

The government, following a blaze in Old Dhaka's Nimtoli in 2010, in which 124 died, decided to move chemical warehouses from residential areas to industrial zones in Keraniganj or Kamrangir Char. After this year's Chawkbazar fire that claimed 70 lives, relocation of the chemical factories and warehouses became a hot topic again.

A Tk 201.80 crore project to be implemented on 50 acres of land in Keraniganj is scheduled to be completed in June 2021. The Ecneec approved the project last year.

Nearly six years -- from June 2011 to 2017 -- were spent on forming committees, holding meetings, selecting project site, deciding its size and reaching an agreement with industry owners, according to the project documents.

The Ecneec yesterday also approved a revised project on constructing a 330MW power plant in Khulna, increasing the cost by 20.45 percent to Tk 3,919 crore.

The deadline of the project was extended by three years. Earlier, the deadline was 2019.

Eng thrash Afghanistan

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ahead of holders Australia to sit top of the World Cup group table on net run-rate.

Morgan's six-hitting spree in his career-best 148 set the tone for England's team total of 25 sixes, which was also a new ODI innings record.

The Dubliner's innings, which featured 118 runs in boundaries, was all the more impressive as Morgan had been doubtful for this match with a back spasm suffered in England's win over the West Indies, in which he could not bat.

"I'm getting quite old, running around with a bad back, I never thought in my wildest dreams I'd produce an innings like that!" Morgan said.

"I had an extremely bad back after the last game but our medical staff have done wonders with medication and extensive treatment. I have pretty much been living with the physio."

"It was a special day. It's the World Cup. We're loving playing in it. On the big stage, it is nice to do."

Morgan's masterclass was the centrepiece of England's 397-6.

That was the highest total of the

tournament so far and the largest England had made at any World Cup, surpassing their 386-6 against Bangladesh in Cardiff 10 days ago.

Even though bottom of the table Afghanistan, suffering their fifth defeat in five matches, posted their highest World Cup total of 247-8 they were never up with the required run-rate.

"We are where we want to be. The next two or three games are pretty crucial," Morgan said of England's World Cup hopes.

"We want to bring our level of intensity to every game. Making that a priority is important to us."

Afghanistan captain Gulbadin Naib saluted Morgan, saying: "It was one of the best innings I've ever seen from Eoin so congratulations to him."

"We did a lot of good things in the field but we dropped Morgan, which is the main point of his innings and how he then utilised it."

Hashmatullah Shahidi completed a gutsy 68-ball fifty on his way to 76, while his fourth-wicket stand of partnership of 94 with Ashgar Afghan (44) was a record for any Afghanistan wicket at a World Cup.

Earlier, Morgan, dropped on 28, dominated a third-wicket stand of 189 with Joe Root (88), whose contribution to their partnership was a mere 43.

Afghanistan star leg-spinner Rashid Khan set an unwanted record with 0-110 in nine overs -- the most expensive return at a World Cup and second costliest in all ODI cricket.

Morgan's tally surpassed the record of 16 sixes in an ODI innings previously shared by India's Rohit Sharma, South Africa's AB de Villiers and West Indies' Chris Gayle.

He broke the record when he launched Naib for a flat straight hit over his head.

But the very next ball saw Morgan hole out off Naib to end a 71-ball innings that also featured four fours.

Jonny Bairstow had got England off to a solid start, with England accelerating after James Vince fell for 26 when he mishooked pacesman Dawlat Zadran to short fine-leg.

In sight of his eighth ODI century, Bairstow's 99-ball innings ended when he chipped a return catch to Naib.

British PM hopefuls begin crucial week of votes

AFP, London

The six Conservatives vying to become Britain's prime minister faced off in the second round of voting yesterday, with the final pair to be decided by the end of the week.

The outcome of the leadership battle could determine under what conditions Britain leaves the European Union. It is currently scheduled to leave on October 31.

All of the party's 313 MPs can take part in the secret ballot in the contest to replace outgoing leader Theresa May, with further rounds scheduled to whittle the list down to a final two, who will face the party's 160,000 grassroots members.

Boris Johnson, the former foreign minister and leading Brexit campaigner, ran away with the first round of voting last week, winning

the support of 114 MPs -- more than twice the number of votes won by his nearest challengers.

Johnson has said he is open to leaving the EU on October 31 without a formal deal between London and Brussels but would prefer to secure one by the deadline.

Opponents of "no-deal" say it would cause economic chaos as Britain breaks up with its top trading partner.

Any candidate failing to win the support of at least 33 MPs will be eliminated, with the worst performing contender dropping out if they all reach the threshold.

The result will be announced around 6pm (1700 GMT).

Two hours later, the remaining candidates will then do battle in a BBC televised debate, following a first TV showdown on Sunday that Johnson skipped.

New York OKs driving licences for undocumented migrants

AFP, New York

New York State Monday passed a law allowing undocumented migrants to obtain their driving license, a controversial move by the Democratic stronghold intended to thwart the Trump administration's restrictive immigration policy.

"This legislation will not only provide undocumented immigrants with a legal solution to obtain a driver's license, but its positive impacts will include significant economic growth, improved road safety, and it will keep hardworking families together," Senator Luis Sepulveda, one of its leading proponents, said in a statement.

International community's effort not enough

Rohingyas write to PM; say they don't want to stay in camps for long

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Rohingya organisation based in Cox's Bazar camps yesterday wrote a letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina saying they don't want to stay in Bangladesh for long and demanded that the international community put pressure on Myanmar to make Rakhine safe for them.

Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace and Human Rights (ARSPH), a group that represents parts of the refugee community, yesterday issued a media statement where it mentioned about the letter.

"The international community has lost focus and is too distracted by humanitarian issues in the refugee camps," said the statement, adding that they didn't think that enough pressure is being put on the Myanmar leaders to make the repatriation process possible.

"We keep hearing them say Rohingya refugees will be in Bangladesh [for] a very long time. This is not what we want. Bangladesh is not our home. We don't want to stay in refugee camps in Bangladesh forever," the statement added.

The statement also claimed that the reluctance of the Myanmar government to take responsibility for their safe return is barring the Rohingyas from returning their homes in Rakhine.

"We think it is because the international community does not really care about what Rohingya refugees want. They are not really listening to us," ASPHR said.

They thanked the PM and the people of Bangladesh for sheltering 1.1 million Rohingyas, including the 741,000 who fled Rakhine following a military crackdown since August 2017, in crowded refugee camps in Cox's Bazar.

Two deals -- one between Myanmar and Bangladesh in November, 2017 and the other among Myanmar, UNDP and UNHCR in June last year -- have so far been inked to initiate the repatriation process. However, the process is yet to begin.

"We know this is not an easy situation for Rohingya refugees and host communities [in Cox's Bazar]. This situation is not sustainable," the statement said.

ASPHR said they want to work together with the government of Bangladesh for a safe and dignified repatriation.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Golam Moshfi yesterday called upon the foreign diplomats in Riyadh to create pressure on Myanmar so that it created necessary conditions for the safe return of Rohingyas.

At a briefing organised by the Bangladesh embassy at a Riyadh hotel, he said it has become a major challenge for Bangladesh to bear the burden of so many refugees for so long.

Some 60 diplomats present there gave assurance to cooperate Bangladesh in this regard.