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PADMA BRIDGE

Wait now gets even longer

Authorities seek to push deadline by one and a half years

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

People's wait for the Padma bridge is going to get longer as the authorities now seek to extend the deadline for one and a half years. The new deadline to complete the work will be June 2021; currently it is December this year. This is the fourth time the deadline is being changed. However, the authorities did not seek escalation of the project cost, which is Tk 30,193 crore, officials said. The Bridges Division, the implementing authority of the project, in September sent a proposal to the planning ministry, seeking extension of time. And the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED), after a recent spot visit recommended the time extension with some

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Asma Begum helps her son Sadikur to move at Nitor (also known as Pangu Hospital) in the capital yesterday. The six-year-old lost his right hand from the elbow down and several fingers of the left one in Wednesday's cylinder blast in Rupnagar. Inset, 14-year-old Biswajit admitted to the National Institute of Ophthalmology and Hospital with splinter injuries to the eyes.

PHOTO: SHAHEEN MOLLAH

RUPNAGAR CYLINDER BLAST

Grief, despair rack families

Toll rises to 7; boy, 13, may not see again; another, 6, lost an arm

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MUNTAKIM SAAD

Rupnagar cylinder blast has changed the lives of Bishwajit Chandra Das, 13, and Sadikur, 6, forever. Bishwajit does not know whether he would be able to see again. His eyes were damaged by splinters. And Sadikur lost his right arm and received serious injuries to his left. Families of other victims have also been devastated. Bishwajit was taken to National Institute of Ophthalmology and Hospital yesterday morning with bandages on his eyes. Doctors operated on his eyes but didn't tell family members what they could expect. His mother Jhuma Rani Das, a garment worker, said, "All of my dreams have shattered." Jhuma said Bishwajit came to Dhaka from their home in Sunanganj two months ago and worked at a sweatshop. "My salary is about Tk 9,000 and my son earned Tk 3,500," said Jhuma, who raised her son alone since she was divorced by her husband years ago.

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CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

SC upholds Azhar's death penalty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday upheld the death sentence of top Jamaat-e-Islami leader ATM Azharul Islam for his involvement in genocide and crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War. A four-member bench of the SC's Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, delivered the verdict around five years after the International Crimes Tribunal-1 handed down capital punishment to Azhar for the crimes committed in Rangpur. The apex court came up with a short verdict without disclosing the names of the judges who gave the majority and minority views. It upheld four charges against Azhar, but acquitted him of another. The grounds and observations on which the court delivered the verdict could not be known immediately as the full text of the judgement was not released. Azhar, now 67, was the commander of notorious Al-Badr force and president of Chhatra Sangha, the then student wing of Jamaat - a party

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WAR CRIMES APPEALS

29 cases still pending with the top court

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Some 29 appeals filed by the convicted war criminals against their death sentences are still pending with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. The division has so far disposed of only eight such appeals, including the one filed by ATM Azharul Islam, in the last six years. Two appeals filed by former Jamaat-e-Islami ameer Ghulam Azam and former BNP minister Abdul Alim against their jail sentences have been declared "abated" by the apex court as they died while their appeals were pending with this court. An amendment to the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act- 1979 in February 2013, making a provision for disposing of appeals against the sentences in 60 days, raised the hope that the SC would quickly deliver the judgments.

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making sense of money

Falu's properties worth Tk 343cr confiscated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday seized BNP chairperson's former adviser Mosaddek Ali Falu's properties worth Tk 343 crore in connection with a case filed against him over money laundering. ACC Deputy Director Gulshan Anwar Prodhani, who is the investigating officer of the case, made the seizure following a court order for confiscation. On May 13, the anti-graft body filed the case against Falu, a former member of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's advisory council, and three others under the Money Laundering Act for siphoning Tk 183.92 crore to Dubai. During investigation, the ACC found another

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Councillor Manju held for extortion

Local traders distribute sweets in celebration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rab yesterday arrested Dhaka South City Corporation ward councillor Mainul Haque Manju at his office for his alleged involvement in extortion and recovered firearms and narcotics in his possession. Manju, councillor of ward-39, was arrested in a case filed on Wednesday over demanding Tk 2 lakh from a trader at the capital's Rajdhani Super Market, said Rab-3 Commanding Officer Lt Col Shafee Bulbul, adding that the councillor had long been running an extortion racket in the area. "He amassed crores of taka from extortion, grabbing properties of others, and expanding his activities," the Rab CO said, adding that he used to send the money to his family in the USA through Hundi (an illegal non-banking channel). Rab said they found two firearms, some bottles of liquor, a stash of cannabis, and a large amount of sex stimulating pills in the ward councillor's office. His office is in the same building in which a Rab-3 office is located. The councillor could not show any valid documents of the firearms, said the Rab official. Rab last night filed two cases against Manju with Wari Police Station under the Arms Act and the Narcotics

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Bangladeshis who gambled in Singapore under scanner

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

The Anti-Corruption Commission has opened an investigation into the wealth of Bangladeshis who played in the casinos of Singapore in the last five years. The move came as part of an ongoing anti-corruption campaign, which saw the rounding up of several people involved in illegal casino business in the country. Seeking details of the Bangladeshi gamblers, the ACC wrote to the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau of Singapore on Wednesday, an official told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity. "An investigation has revealed that a number of people have laundered their ill-gotten money to different countries including Singapore,"

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