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UPDATING TRANSPORT PAPERS

Govt caves in, waives delay fine

Road transport secretary says benefit given to make transport owners, drivers obey the law

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Giving in to the pressure from transport associations, the government has waived the late fines for vehicle owners and drivers who failed to update their documents on time.

The vehicle owners and drivers would enjoy the benefit till June 30, according to a circular of the road transport and bridges ministry issued yesterday.

The order came into effect immediately.

The notice said this was for the last time the government was going to grant such a waiver. The ministry asked Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) to circulate the information among the transport owners.

Under the traffic law, vehicle owners and drivers have to pay a certain amount of fine for failing to update the vehicle's fitness certificate, tax token, route permit and licence.

Talking to The Daily Star, two BRTA officials said although the waiver would be applicable for all types of vehicles and drivers, commercial vehicles like bus, truck, and covered van and their drivers would actually be benefited by the order.

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With a train approaching (not in the picture), a rickshaw carrying a passenger squeezes through the closing gate at the capital's Malibagh rail crossing, ignoring the risk of a possible accident. According to Buet's Accident Research Institute, at least 239 people were killed and 470 others injured at level crossings and adjacent areas in rail-related incidents last year. The photo was taken on Sunday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

ABRAR'S DEATH
Prothom Alo editor gets anticipatory bail from HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted a four-week anticipatory bail to Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman in a case filed for "negligence" over the death of Naimul Abrar Rahat, a student of Dhaka Residential Model College.

It asked Matiur Rahman to surrender before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court when the bail period is over and said the court concerned would consider if he filed a bail petition.

The HC bench of Justice Obaidul Hassan and Justice AKM Zahirul Huq passed the order after Barrister M Amir-ul Islam moved a bail petition on behalf of the Bangla daily's editor and five others.

While granting the anticipatory bail to Matiur Rahman, the court also directed the law enforcers not to harass or arrest the five others until police

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LALDIGHI MASSACRE

5 ex-cops get death penalty

Cops opened fire on AL procession led by Hasina, killing 24 people in 1988

FM MIZANUR RAHMAN, Ctg

A Chattogram court yesterday sentenced five former policemen to death over opening fire on a procession led by Awami League President Sheikh Hasina that killed 24 people in 1988.

Chattogram District and Sessions Judge's Court and also acting Special Judge Md Ismail Hossain delivered the verdict in a murder case.

Hasina was going to attend a rally of AL-led 15-party alliance in the port city's Laldighi Maidan on January 24 that year, demanding resignation of military dictator HM Ershad.

The convicts are: former constables Pradip Barua, Mostafizur Rahman, Shah Md Abdulla, Mamaj Uddin, and patrol inspector Gobindra Chandra Mandal alias GC Mondal of Kotwali area under Chattogram Metropolitan Police.

Of them, GC Mondal is absconding while the rest were present in the courtroom.

The key accused in the case, then CMP

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

2001 CPB RALLY BLAST

10 Huji men to walk gallows

Six of the convicts absconding; 2 acquitted

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced 10 members of banned militant outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami (Huji) to death in a case filed over the bomb attack on a CPB rally in the capital's Paltan 19 years ago.

Judge Md Robiul Alam of the third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka delivered the 104-page verdict.

The 10 convicts are Mufti Moin Uddin Sheikh, Mowlana Sabir Ahmed, Mowlana Shawkat Osman, Arif Hassan Sumon, Mufti Abdul Hai, Mufti Shafiqur Rahman, Jahangir Alam Badar, Nur Islam, Mohibul Mutakin and Anisul Mursalin. Of them, all but the first four are on the run.

The court also fined them Tk 20,000 each.

Two other accused, Moshirul Rahman and Rafiqul Alam Miraj, were acquitted of the charges as the charges brought against them were not proved beyond doubt.

The judge said Huji chief Mufti Hannan's name was dropped from the case as he was hanged in a case over the grenade attack on then British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Anwar Choudhury, in Sylhet on April 12, 2017.

On January 20, 2001, five people were killed and 23 others injured in the bomb attack on the rally of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB).

Following the incident, then CPB president Monzurul Ahsan Khan filed a murder case with Motijheel Police Station, accusing some unknown people.

CID Inspector Mrinal Kanti Saha, also the investigation officer of the case, submitted two charge sheets in as many cases to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka on November 27, 2013.

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CITY TRAFFIC SIGNAL

Find out why it is being mismanaged

HC asks DMP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday asked the authorities concerned to identify the reasons behind the mismanagement in monitoring and maintaining the capital's traffic lights and submit a report to it in 30 days.

An HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman also issued a rule asking why the inaction of authorities concerned regarding the mismanagement should not be declared illegal.

The HC Bench was hearing a writ petition filed by lawyers Manoj Kumar Bhowmick and Sulaiman Howlader.

Secretaries of the home and local government ministries, inspector general of police, commissioner of Dhaka

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Scientists make food from thin air



CNN ONLINE

In Finland, scientists are making an entirely new ingredient out of air, water and electricity -- and they hope it could revolutionise the way our food is produced.

Feeding an ever-growing population is putting a huge strain on the Earth's resources. Agriculture is one of the world's largest sources of greenhouse gases, with animal farming in particular responsible for 14.5% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, mostly from beef and dairy cattle.

On top of that, farming uses vast areas of land that might otherwise be home to carbon-storing forests; it also guzzles huge amounts of water -- up to 70% of water-use worldwide, according to the OECD.

But a Helsinki-based company is trying to change that. "In order to save the planet from climate change, we need to disconnect food production from agriculture," says Pasi Vainikka, CEO of Solar Foods.

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3 held with 11kg gold at Benapole

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh yesterday arrested three people in Jashore's Benapole upazila for trying to smuggle gold worth around Tk 6.60 crore into India.

The arrestees are Jahidul Islam, 38, and Yakub Ali, 28, from Jashore's Sharsa upazila, and Dilwar Hossain 23, from Cumilla's Daudkandi upazila, said Lt Colonel Selim Reza, commanding officer at BGB Battalion-49.

BGB men intercepted a brand new Toyota Premio carrying the three in

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PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 21

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:15 5:43 7:15
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:30 5:47 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Nadda elected unopposed as BJP chief

REUTERS, New Delhi



India's Hindu nationalist ruling party yesterday elevated a veteran lawmaker and long-time associate of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to become its president ahead of a string of state elections.

Jagat Prakash Nadda, who rose through the ranks after cutting his teeth as a student leader in the 1970s, will become the new president of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), replacing Amit Shah, currently India's Home Minister.

Nadda was elected unopposed, the party said.

Led by Modi and Shah, the BJP returned to power, winning in a general election in 2019 by a landslide majority, but the party has failed to keep its hold on a number of key Indian states amid growing criticism over some of its

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Vehicles cross old Dhaka's Kazi Alauddin Road inundated by water from leaked sewerage line. Locals said though the stinky water flooded the road two days ago, the authorities did nothing to fix the line until yesterday afternoon when this photo was taken.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Alarm as new virus spreads in China

SARS-like virus killed a third person; 136 new cases confirmed before Lunar New Year holiday

AFP, Beijing

A SARS-like virus has killed a third person, spread around China and reached another Asian country, authorities said yesterday, fuelling fears of a major outbreak as millions begin travelling for the Lunar New Year in humanity's biggest migration.

The new coronavirus strain, first discovered in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, has caused alarm because of its connection to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), which killed nearly 650 people across mainland China and Hong Kong in 2002-2003.

Wuhan has 11 million inhabitants and serves as a major transport hub, including during the annual Lunar New Year holiday which begins later this week and sees hundreds of millions of Chinese people travel across the country to visit family.

Weighing in on the matter for the first time, Chinese President Xi Jinping said yesterday that safeguarding people's lives should be given "top priority" and that the spread of the epidemic "should be resolutely contained", according to state broadcaster CCTV.

Xi said it was necessary to "release information on the epidemic in a timely manner and deepen international cooperation," and ensure people have a "stable and peaceful Spring Festival", the broadcaster said.

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