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SHAH CEMENT

KHULNA-MONGLA RAIL PROJECT

Sad tale of delays, cost escalation

Almost a decade gone yet over a third of work remains

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

When the government approved the Khulna-Mongla Port Rail Line project in December 2010, construction of the 64.75km rail line was supposed to be completed within December 2013.

Implausible though it may sound, physical work of the project started in September 2016, allegedly due to complications concerning various issues, including land acquisition and changes in the design.

In the meantime, the project missed several deadlines and the cost rose more than doubled the original estimate.

The project was undertaken to bring the country's second-largest seaport under a railway network and boost the regional connectivity.

As the latest deadline expired in June this year, the project authority has sought another extension period of at least one year as they could complete only 63 percent work till April this year, documents show.

"Possibility of completing the project in due time is unlikely. It may take up to December 2021 to complete the work," according to a report of the planning ministry's Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED).

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A motorcycle struggles to move on the battered road in front of Kamalapur Railway Station in the capital. Locals say the road has been in such a condition for the last eight months. The road is heavily used by intercity buses, trucks, and articulated lorries that carry goods to and from Chattogram port.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Erosion adds to woes in flooded areas

STAR REPORT

River erosion has taken a serious turn in several flood-hit districts, rendering many people homeless.

Many victims, along with their livestock, have moved to safe places.

Meanwhile, floodwater has started receding in some districts, while fresh areas are feared to be inundated in the region adjacent to Dhaka.

Erosion has started at 35 points in Kurigram and Lalmonirhat.

At least 700 houses in the two districts, including 500 in Kurigram, already went into rivers, and a vast tract of arable land with crops and fruit orchards were devoured in the last three days.

Those who became homeless take shelter on roads, dykes, and other high grounds in the affected areas.

"My house and farmland were eroded by the Brahmaputra on Sunday morning. We are now homeless," said

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4 killed in 'shootouts' in Dhaka, Cox's Bazar

STAR REPORT

Two alleged muggers and two suspected Rohingya drug peddlers were killed in separate "shootout" incidents in the capital and Cox's Bazar early yesterday.

The muggers, who were killed in a "gunfight" with detectives in city's Khilkhet area, were identified as Nannu and Mosharraf.

The incident took place around 2:30am, said Mashur Rahman, deputy commissioner (Gulshan Division) of Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

A team of detectives signaled an auto-rickshaw near Shewra bus stand area but muggers inside tried to speed away.

The DB team chased their auto-rickshaw and asked another team ahead to put a barricade on the road, he said.

At one point, two of the

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Priority to ongoing projects



Bangabandhu, who is sick, is attended by Begum Mujib and General Secretary of Awami League Zillur Rahman. The photo was published in The Daily Ittefaq on July 6, 1972.

July 7, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

LITTLE ROOM FOR NEW PROJECTS

Minister for finance and planning Tajuddin Ahmad today says that the Annual Development Plan for 1972-73 has been prepared with special emphasis on reconstruction and rehabilitation of the shattered economy and completion of the ongoing projects. The development programme is severely constrained by the legacy of ongoing projects launched earlier by the Pakistan regime. Most of these projects are well on their way of implementation and resources had to be provided for their completion in order to protect the investment already made. This left little room for the inclusion of new projects on a



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Six of a family die in Dinajpur road crash

Brothers die after crash in Mymensingh

STAR REPORT

At least seven people, including six of a family, were killed in a road accident in Dinajpur's Birganj upazila yesterday afternoon.

Two children were among the dead.

The deceased are Abul Hossain, 60, his wife Asma Begum, 45, her sisters Nasrin Begum, 50, and Nargis Akter, 32, Nasrin's daughter Rupa Akter, 8, and Asma's niece Namia Akter, 8 and a van driver whose identity could not be confirmed immediately. All of them were from Kaharol and Birganj upazilas in Dinajpur.

The family was going to a relative's house to attend an invitation.

Quoting locals, police said the accident took place

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Drones light up Seoul sky with virus messages



AFP, Seoul

Hundreds of drones lit up the night sky in Seoul for a spectacular showcase of motivational and awareness messages as the world battles the coronavirus pandemic.

Three hundred unmanned aerial vehicles were programmed to form images above the Han river -- which runs through the South Korean capital -- for the eye-catching flash mob.

The show began with messages reminding people of key precautionary measures, including wearing masks, washing hands and keeping a two-metre distance from others.

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FOOD SECURITY

Pandemic highlights South Asia's weaknesses

Says IFPRI

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of making South Asia's food systems more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient, the International Food Policy Research Institute said yesterday.

Disruptions in supply chains and overwhelmed social protections have led to increased food and nutrition insecurity in the region, said a statement.

The need to work towards inclusive food systems have amplified in all countries in the region, it added.

"Food systems provide opportunities to improve food and nutrition security, generate income, and drive inclusive economic growth, but even in prosperous times, too many people

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JUTE MILLS CLOSURE Two labour leaders detained

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Law enforcers detained two jute mills labour leaders from their Khulna homes early yesterday for interrogation.

The detainees are Waliar Rahman and Nur Islam, temporary workers of Eastern Jute Mills and Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills.

The two mills are among the 25 state-run jute mills closed down by the government on July 1.

Waliar is the convener of Jute Industry Protection Youth Alliance and Nur is an adviser to Jute Industry Protection Youth Alliance.

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Two doctors speaking to the people waiting in a queue for coronavirus testing in front of Mugda Medical College Hospital in the capital yesterday. The hospital has a capacity to test 190 samples every day. It issues 80 tickets for walk-in patients and keep the rest for staffers and the patients admitted to the hospital.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

COVID-19 CASES India surges to 3rd-highest

Reports 24,000 infections in 24 hrs; US hospitals struggle to respond

AGENCIES

India yesterday became the third-highest coronavirus caseload in the world, as officials warned hospitals in the United States were in danger of being overwhelmed by a surge in infections.

Despite signs of progress in parts of Europe -- where the Louvre in Paris reopened yesterday -- total global infections are fast approaching 11.5 million, with more than 534,000 deaths.

The Indian government -- like many around the world -- has gradually lifted virus restrictions to help the battered economy, but the number of cases has continued to climb, with 24,000 reported in 24 hours to take the total to nearly 700,000 yesterday.

India's major cities including New Delhi and Mumbai are the hardest-hit, and critics say too few tests are being conducted and that many Covid-19 infections are likely to go undiagnosed.

The surge has forced authorities in India to convert hotels, wedding halls, a spiritual centre and even railway coaches to help provide care to coronavirus patients.

And in Australia, where the virus outbreak had largely been brought under control, a new spike in cases in Melbourne forced authorities to effectively seal off the state of Victoria from the rest of the country.

Home to more than 6.6 million people, Victoria announced a record 127 new cases yesterday. Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews described the decision to close off

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PRAYER TIMING JULY 7

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-10 12-45 5-00 6-55 8-17
JAMAAT 4-45 1-15 5-15 7-00 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION