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CHECKING VEHICLE FITNESS Govt to hire pvt firm for first time

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

For the first time in the country, the government is going to hire a private company to check motor vehicles' fitness with machines.

The move, aimed at improving road safety, comes when Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) is issuing the vital clearance mostly manually as it has only one digital machine for the job.

Now, Computer Network System (CNS) Limited will set up a 12-lane Vehicle Inspection Centre (VIC) at BRTA's Mirpur office to test more than 400 vehicles every day.

The Cabinet Committee on Public Purchase yesterday approved a proposal, placed by the Road Transport and Highways Division, in this regard.

As per the proposal, CNS, which is now providing several services to the BRTA, will establish, operate and maintain the VIC for five years at a cost of Tk 105.23 crore.

The company will provide training to 200 BRTA staffers on the job and will hand over all equipment to the BRTA after the tenure's end.

"We will sign a contract with the company as soon as we receive documents regarding the approval," a top BRTA official told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said they hoped the company would be able to start its operation (checking vehicles' fitness) within six months.

Asked about the capacity of the VIC, the official said it would check between 384 and 450 vehicles on each working day.

He said the machine would look into seven things of

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A truck stand built illegally in Mohammadpur's Basila in the capital. The stand was built after a canal in Katsur of Basila was unlawfully filled up and occupied by grabbers. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO:
PRABIR DAS

GOVT-SPONSORED PROJECTS

Forex reserve may be used for those

Says finance minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal yesterday said the country's forex reserves could be invested in good projects which would be sponsored by the government.

"The foreign minister said the size of foreign currency reserves will continue to grow. That's why we are thinking how to use this fund," he told reporters after a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Public Purchase.

Kamal's comments come at a time when the country's forex reserves hit the record \$41-billion mark.

He said the foreign currency reserves would be used to implement the government-sponsored projects. "In that case, our money will remain in the country instead of going out and we will be able to use the money for the country's development."

The minister said the demand for money has fallen substantially across the world after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. So, depositing the forex reserves in any foreign bank is not profitable now, he added.

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Bangladesh-Poland economic cooperation

November 5, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

IDI AMIN'S MESSAGE TO BANGABANDHU

Ugandan special envoy JN Kakamba has handed over a personal message from President General Idi Amin to Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman yesterday evening at the Gono Bhaban. The envoy says the expulsion of 'non-citizens' from Uganda is an internal question of Uganda and the expellees have full understanding of that matter. He adds that full humane considerations have been shown to the expellees by his government.

BANGLADESH, POLAND JOINT COMMUNIQUE
Poland and Bangladesh are to exchange an economic mission. It is announced today in a

communiqué released at the end of the official visit by Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad. The decision is taken to finalise trade cooperation between the two countries, especially in the fishing, marine, construction and power sectors, the communiqué says. It adds that Poland still gives its support to the earliest possible admission of Bangladesh into the United Nations.

JAPAN WILL BUILD BRIDGE OVER JAMUNA

The Japanese government has decided to build a bridge over the Jamuna River in the upper reaches of the Ganges as part of its

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LALMONIRHAT LYNCHING

'Khadem called in some people after argument with Jewel'

STAR REPORT

Slain Shahidunnabi Jewel's friend in a statement to police said Jewel did not demean the Holy Quran but had a bitter argument with the Burimari mosque khadem after Asr prayers.

Sultan Rubaiyat Sumon, 50, who was with Jewel on October 29, added that khadem Jobed Ali called in some people who started beating them up on the mosque premises, said Abida Sultana, superintendent of Lalmonirhat police, citing the written statement.

Sumon went back to his Rangpur home yesterday after his treatment in a Lalmonirhat hospital.

He went to Lalmonirhat along with Jewel, a former librarian of Rangpur Cantonment School and College, on a motorbike to get medicine for Jewel from

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A 5-story building in China 'walks' to a new location



CNN ONLINE

Shanghai residents passing through the city's eastern Huangpu district in October might have stumbled upon an unusual sight: a "walking" building.

An 85-year-old primary school has been lifted off the ground -- in its entirety -- and relocated using new technology dubbed the "walking machine."

In the city's latest effort to preserve historic structures, engineers attached nearly 200 mobile supports under the five-story building, according to Lan Wuji, chief technical supervisor of the project.

The supports act like robotic legs. They're split into two groups which alternately rise up and

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FOREIGN WORKERS

KSA to relax sponsorship rules from next March

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia yesterday said it will ease key restrictions on millions of foreign workers, as part of plans to reform its long-criticised labour policy.

Human rights groups have repeatedly called on the kingdom to abolish its "kafala" sponsorship system, described by critics as a modern form of slavery that binds workers to their Saudi employers.

The ministry of human resources and social development said that from March 14, expatriates will no longer need their employers' permission to change jobs, travel or leave Saudi Arabia -- home to some 10 million foreigners. "This initiative will improve and increase the efficiency of the work environment," the ministry said in a statement carried by the

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'No religion supports killing'

Momen writes to French counterpart, says Dhaka respects everyone's religious values

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh has reaffirmed its commitment to show respect for everyone's religious and cultural sensitivity, conveying to the France government that no religion supports killings.

"It's our long-standing policy to have respect for each other," said Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday, adding that he wrote a letter to his French counterpart Jean-Yves Le Drian.

"Everyone has sensitivity. We're very aware

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PRAYER TIMING NOVEMBER 5

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:55 12:45 4:00 5:30 7:15
JAMAAT 5:30 1:15 4:15 5:34 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A man selling wool on a footpath in Golap Shah Mazar area of Gulistan. For many years, he has been selling wool to people, who like to make their own winter wear, just before the cold weather sets in. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO:
AMRAN HOSSAIN

Europe reels from virus as cases top 11m

Italy agrees curfew joining a host of countries; Russia sees record number of infections

AFP, Rome

Italian officials yesterday agreed to impose a night-time curfew, joining a slew of European nations in ramping up restrictions in the face of a dramatic surge in coronavirus cases.

But the measure, which restricts Italians to their homes between 10:00 pm and 5:00 am, fell short of the kind of rules in force in countries including France, Belgium and Germany.

Governments in Europe are struggling to get a hold of a pandemic that has now infected more than 11 million on the continent.

Yesterday saw Russia announce a daily record for cases and deaths, upping pressure on the government only days after President Vladimir Putin said there were no plans for a lockdown.

The novel coronavirus has killed at least 1,215,957 people since the outbreak emerged in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP at 1100 GMT yesterday. More than 47,520,750 cases of coronavirus have been registered.

On Tuesday, 8,649 new deaths and 544,664 new cases were recorded worldwide. Based on latest reports, the countries with the most new deaths were United States with 1,045, followed by France with 854 and India with 514.

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