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Keep the nat'l icon intact

Architects, urbanists call upon authorities to backtrack on plan to shift Kamalapur station plaza

HELEMUL ALAM

The plan to dismantle the iconic parabolic umbrella roof and plaza of Kamalapur Railway Station to make way for a multimodal hub and an extended metro rail line has stirred up an outcry among experts who say it will be like destroying part of the history of Dhaka.

They have demanded the authorities build the multimodal hub and carry out any expansion keeping the unique structure intact in its current position.

The Bangladesh Railway and Dhaka rail authorities agreed to a new plan last month, which requires shifting of the station plaza to make space for the extended MRT-6 line up to Kamalapur from Motijheel.

Besides, as part of the plan to make Kamalapur a multimodal hub, the existing plaza needs to be demolished to make space for other facilities, Railways Minister Nurul Islam told The Daily Star last month.

The minister, however, said they would build a replica of the parabolic umbrella roof after dismantling the present one as

part of their plan for a "true transport hub". Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will make the final decision in this regard as the existing plaza, an iconic structure, has to be demolished to implement the new plan, he added.

Architect Iqbal Habib, joint secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, said the architecture of Kamalapur is acclaimed internationally and it symbolises Dhaka.

"If you draw a picture of Dhaka, Kamalapur will invariably come to your mind. People keep that iconic image as postcards. You can also find it as decorative paintings behind rickshaws," said Iqbal Habib earlier this week.

The decision to move it is like destroying one of our very few symbolic architectures in Dhaka city."

The government should implement any expansion without touching the original structure of the station to preserve the history and heritage, he added.

Taimur Islam, founder of Urban Study Group (USG), said the structure may be over 50-year-old but its architectural value is undiminished.

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The Kamalapur Railway Station with its iconic parabolic umbrella roof. The authorities plan to dismantle the structure to make way for a multimodal hub and an extended metro rail line. Many experts, however, oppose the plan, saying tearing apart the 50-year-old structure would be like destroying part of the history of Dhaka.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Modi offers fresh talks amid protest by farmers

AFP, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday offered to hold fresh talks to end a stalemate over new agricultural reforms, in his latest push to win over farmers protesting for almost a month against the move.

Tens of thousands of farmers have been camping out near several entry points to New Delhi since November 26 against three new laws they say will lead to dismantling of regulated markets.

They also fear the government would stop buying wheat and rice at guaranteed prices, leaving

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

'Don't bargain with stranded Bangalees' fate'

December 26, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGABANDHU'S SPEECH AT RAJENDRA COLLEGE, FARIDPUR

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman once again asks

Pakistan President ZA Bhutto to stop bargaining with the fate of four lakh Bangalees stranded in Pakistan. "Despite Bhutto's shouting, Pakistani war criminals will be tried on the soil of Bangladesh if I am alive," the prime minister says.

Addressing a huge public meeting today at Faridpur Rajendra College ground the prime minister asks the people to be self-reliant and work hard to build a happy and prosperous

society. He adds that a self-respecting nation cannot afford to depend longer on charity and relief from foreign countries.

The prime minister mentions the food deficit of seven and a half crore maunds, which has been met mostly by imports from India, Soviet Union, the United States, Canada and other friendly countries. He urges farmers to boost production of food grains to avoid recurrence of such a colossal food deficit.

Bangabandhu reiterates his government's determination to



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Turkey wants 'better ties' with Israel

Says Erdogan

REUTERS, Ankara

Turkey would like better ties with Israel but Israeli policy towards the Palestinians remains "unacceptable", President Tayyip Erdogan said yesterday.

Turkey and Israel, once allies, have had a bitter falling out in recent years. Ankara has repeatedly condemned Israel's occupation in the West Bank and its treatment of Palestinians. It has also criticised recent US-brokered rapprochements between Israel and four Muslim countries.

"The Palestine policy is our red line. It is

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Covid-sniffing dogs deployed at Santiago airport



REUTERS, Santiago

The task of sniffing out passengers infected with Covid-19 at Chile's Santiago international airport is going to the dogs.

A team of Golden Retrievers and Labradors sit when they smell the virus and get a treat. The canines sport green "biotector" jackets with a red cross.

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Ctg cop dies from Covid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A 45-year-old constable of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) died with coronavirus yesterday.

The policeman -- Jahirul Islam, of Laxmipur district -- was serving the Special Branch (SB).

He was undergoing treatment at ICU of Chattogram General Hospital before he breathed his last around 6:05am, Abdul Warish, deputy commissioner of CMP's Special Branch, said.

He was tested positive for Covid-19 on December 6, added the DC.

He joined to Bangladesh Police in 1996.

His body has been sent to his village after Namaz-e-janaza, the DC said.

With him, a total six CMP personnel have died with Covid-19 so far.



A father placing a festive cap on the youngest member of his family during Christmas celebrations at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon hotel in the capital yesterday morning.

Britons in two minds about Brexit trade deal

AFP, Boston

After months of fraught negotiations between the European Union and the UK, Britons welcomed Thursday's "Christmas present" Brexit deal with relief and some scepticism.

David Ashby, a 62-year-old from the town of Boston on the east coast of England, called it "a nice Christmas present for the country", saying it was good "just to get it all finished and tied up and done with".

"I think it's dragged on for too long now," he added.

Andy Finch, who also lives in the Lincolnshire market town which voted by a higher margin than anywhere else in the UK to leave the EU, sounded a pessimistic note.

"I don't think it was a good idea in the first place. I still don't think it's a good idea. But that's where we are. And, well, we'll just have to see," Finch said.

Paul Skinner, leader of Boston Borough Council, also questioned the thinking behind leaving the European Union.

"At the end of the day, what we do need to be doing is working with our partners,

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20 more die from Covid

1,136 test positive in a day

UNB, Dhaka

The Covid-19 fatalities in Bangladesh rose to 7,398 with 20 more deaths recorded in the past 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday amid apprehensions that winter could complicate the coronavirus situation.

The health authorities reported 1,163 new cases during the same period, taking the country's caseload to 507,265 as the detection of new strains of coronavirus in the United Kingdom and South Africa sparks worries.

Meanwhile, the death rate stood at 1.46 percent, the Directorate General of Health Services said.

So far, 448,803 patients -- 88.87 percent -- have recovered, including 2,113 in those 24 hours.

Bangladesh reported its first cases on March 8. The infection number reached

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PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 26
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:25 12:45 3:45 5:24 7:00
JAMAT 6:00 1:15 4:00 5:27 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Don't squander sacrifices

Says WHO chief as people celebrate Christmas under pandemic's shadow

AGENCIES

The sacrifices made to protect people during the coronavirus pandemic must not be squandered over the festive period, the World Health Organization's chief said in a Christmas message.

Millions were making "heart-wrenching sacrifices" by staying away from loved ones on Christmas Day, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a video clip posted to Twitter late Thursday, while others will have a missing face at the family table.

He said vaccines, now beginning

to be deployed in countries around the world, were starting to offer a way out of the crisis that has engulfed the planet this year.

As 2020 draws to an end, a pandemic of historic proportions is preventing many of us from celebrating in the ways we would like, Tedros said.

"Instead, hundreds of millions of people are today making great, heart-wrenching sacrifices by staying apart to stay safe.

"But in doing so, they are giving the most precious gifts: the gifts of life and health."

The coronavirus has killed at least 1.74 million people since the outbreak emerged in China last December, while almost 79.5 million cases have been registered, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP.

"All around the world, throughout this most trying of years, we have seen over and over again the sacrifices of so many people to protect and preserve life," said Tedros.

"We must not squander their sacrifices, nor those made by so many families who, this holiday season, will sit at family tables missing a familiar face."

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URGENT: Attention all Canadians in Bangladesh,

URGENT : Attention à tous les Canadiens au Bangladesh,

Due to the **COVID-19** pandemic we are strongly urging all Canadian Citizens to immediately register as a Canadian abroad (ROCA) at <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration> to enable you to receive important safety updates from the Government of Canada.

Please share this important information with other Canadian citizens in your area and encourage them to register with ROCA at <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration>

Global Affairs Canada

Canada

Government of Canada Gouvernement du Canada

En raison de la pandémie **COVID-19**, nous encourageons fortement tous les citoyens canadiens à s'inscrire immédiatement comme Canadiens à l'étranger (ROCA) à <https://voyage.gc.ca/voyager/inscription> pour vous permettre de recevoir d'importantes mises à jour importantes en matière de sécurité de la part du gouvernement du Canada.

Veuillez partager cette information importante avec d'autres citoyens canadiens de votre région et les encourager à s'inscrire auprès de ROCA à <https://voyage.gc.ca/voyager/inscription>

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