



আবাস বাংলাদেশ!

HIGHEST SELLING 15 CEMENT for more than years

## DHAKA METRO RAIL Rollout likely by this year

Says Japanese envoy in  
New Year message

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Japan expects Bangladesh's first metro rail service to be operational in the capital by this year despite setbacks caused by the pandemic.

"I am delighted to share with you that Dhaka MRT Line 6 is expected to start operation within this year," Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh ITO Naoki said in a new year message yesterday.

Japan is funding the Dhaka MRT Line 6, which costs \$2.8 billion. About 60,000 people will be able to commute per hour using the 20.1-km route. It will reduce travel time from Uttara to Motijheel from at least two hours to less than an hour.

Japan also funds other mega projects including the Dhaka Mass Rapid Transit, Third Terminal of Dhaka Airport and Matarbari Deep Sea Port.

MAN Siddique, managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited (DMTCL), the implementing agency of the project, said the MRT-6 progressed 55.19 percent as of December last year.

The first phase, between Uttara and Agarigaon, progressed 78.38 percent while the second phase, between Agargon and Motijheel, progressed 9.47 percent, he told reporters at his office yesterday.

Viaducts in 11.30 km of the 11.73-km first phase have been constructed and the rest would be done by this month, he said.

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The laundry put out to dry is the telltale sign that people are still living in the almost destroyed shanties in Old Dhaka's Islambagh. The Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority knocked down several shanties in the slum on Tuesday. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Mirza stirs up debate once again

Asks jurnos to  
check PM's wealth  
statement before  
asking about his

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Abdul Quader Mirza, younger brother of Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader, yesterday urged journalists to look into the wealth statement of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina before checking his.

Mirza, who has stirred up a debate in the country's political arena with some of his recent remarks, made the comment while addressing a street rally in Noakhali's Companiganj upazila.

Citing the name of a national daily, he said, "They have asked me to reveal my wealth statement. Why would I do this? Thousands of people are the sources of my wealth. Thousands of my supporters are across the world. They give me money. Should I unveil this to you [journalists]?"

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## 'Hard road ahead' to beat Covid

Warns WHO, calls for  
intensified measures over  
'alarming' virus variant

AFP, Geneva

World Health Organization experts warned Wednesday there could be six months of "hard, hard road ahead" in 2021 before vaccines turn the tide against the coronavirus pandemic.

Maria Van Kerkhove, the WHO's technical lead on Covid-19, said that in many countries, the situation was very worrying -- and would get worse.

"A handful of countries are really seeing incredibly intense transmission," notably in Europe and North America, with "some really scary numbers in terms of cases, hospitalisations and admissions to intensive care units", she said.

Social mixing of households over the Christmas and New Year period will result in a further rise in case numbers in January, she told a live event on WHO social media channels.

"We are starting to see it now; we will see it in the coming weeks. In many countries, we will see the situation will get worse before it gets better," she said.

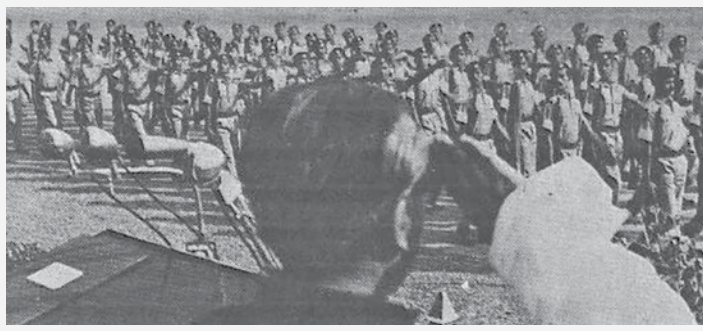
Michael Ryan, the WHO's emergencies director, said there had been a wave of expectation when vaccines began to trickle on stream last month, but people could not breathe a sigh of relief and slacken their vigilance against the disease.

"We're all a year into this. It's a really, really hard road ahead."

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## BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

### First industrial and investment policy announced



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman inspecting a parade of Bangladesh Rifles at Peelkhana on January 8, 1973.

January 8, 1973

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

#### TK 25 LAKH PRIVATE INVESTMENT ALLOWED

The first industrial and investment policy of the country is announced by Industries Minister Syed Nazrul Islam today. The policy provides for private investment in medium and small industries with a maximum ceiling of Tk 25 lakh and grants moratorium on nationalisation of such industrial units for 10 years. The government will, however, have the right to nationalise any industrial unit even during the moratorium in the case of underutilisation of the installed capacity due to neglect or mismanagement. The industrial policy makes provision for foreign investment only in collaboration with the government. The foreign investors shall be able to remit all post-tax dividends of foreign capital in Bangladesh.

It has also been stated in the policy that a Cottage Industry Corporation will be set up which shall endeavour to promote

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## ONION IMPORT Govt slaps 10pc tariff to protect growers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has imposed 10 percent tariff on onion import to protect interests of local growers, read a notification issued by National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday.

The revenue administration slapped 5 percent regulatory duty and re-imposed 5 percent customs duty on import of the essential cooking ingredient.

The move came less than a week after the Ministry of Commerce requested for imposition of import tariff as prices of onions started falling due to import of early varieties of onions from India.

The neighboring country withdrew ban on import by the end of the last month and onion import from India began from early this month, raising concerns among local farmers for ample supply of the perishable during the current harvesting period.

Farmers have been expanding the cultivation

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## Robot dog gains ability to fend off human attackers



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A robot dog has been taught how to defend itself if it is antagonised by a human.

The mechanical animal, called Jueying, was developed at China's Zhejiang University, and through a collaboration with researchers from the University of Edinburgh let the mechanical canine learn what to do when it was assaulted.

Roboticians used a deep neural network -- an algorithm that is designed to mimic the human brain -- to train a computer model of the robot dog. This gave it the ability to trot, or stand up again if it fell over.

If the robot did something beneficial to its task, it was rewarded, and if it did not it was digitally noted as a negative behaviour -- essentially a more sophisticated trial-and-error method that researchers use to train robots to learn.

"The AI approach is very different in the sense that it captures experience, which the robot has tried hundreds of thousands of times, or even

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## TRAFFICKED ROHINGYAS Myanmar cops arrest nearly 100 in raid

AFP, Yangon

Nearly 100 Rohingyas smuggled from Myanmar's conflict-scarred Rakhine state were arrested in a raid in Yangon, police announced yesterday, with authorities saying they had been headed to Malaysia as part of a trafficking network.

The plight of the Rohingyas captured international headlines in 2017 after a military crackdown in western Rakhine state sent almost 750,000 fleeing across the border to Bangladesh.

Members of the stateless minority group have long faced discrimination in

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PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 8  
Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5:30 12:30 4:00 5:30 7:00  
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:35 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

**Two pied avocets spotted in the Padma river in Rajshahi. They are striking white waders with bold black markings. This migratory bird mainly eats crustaceans and insects.**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ZABER ANSARY

## 31 more die from Covid, 1,007 test positive

STAR REPORT

Thirty-one people died from Covid-19 in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, according to a press release issued by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The total number of deaths has now reached at 7,718 and the death rate stands at 1.48 percent.

At least 1,007 new infections were recorded in the meantime, taking the total number of people infected to 519,905, added the release.

The current positivity rate is 6.55 percent while the total positivity rate stands at 15.67 percent.

A total of 15,381 samples were tested across the country in those 24 hours.

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যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের সংবাদ সংস্থা রুমবার্গের এক সূত্রে  
'কোভিড সহনশীল র্যাঙ্কিং'-এ

**শীর্ষ ২০ এ বাংলাদেশ**

বৈশ্বিক মহামারি করোনা ভাইরাস মোকাবিলা করে আর্থ-সামাজিক উন্নয়নসহ বসবাস উপযোগী নিরাপদ শীর্ষ ২০ দেশের তালিকায় বাংলাদেশের অবস্থান এবং দক্ষিণ এশিয়ার মধ্যে শীর্ষ স্থান অর্জন করায়

**গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের**  
মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী  
**জননেত্রী শেখ হাসিনা**

এবং

**জনাব জাহিদ মালেক**, এম পি  
স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়,  
সহ সঞ্চালিত মন্ত্রীপরিষদ সচিব, মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রীর মুখ্য সচিব ও  
মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রীর অফিসের সচিবগণ, স্বাস্থ্য মন্ত্রণালয়ের সকল সচিব  
এবং মন্ত্রণালয়ের কর্মকর্তা-কর্মচারী, চিকিৎসক, নার্স, স্বাস্থ্যকর্মী সকলকে  
বাংলাদেশ প্রাইভেট মেডিকেল কলেজ এসোসিয়েশনের  
পক্ষ থেকে কৃতজ্ঞতা ও অভিনন্দন।

ডঃ আনোয়ার হোসেন খান, এম এ  
সভাপতি

এম এ মুবিন খান  
সচিব

Bangladesh Private Medical College Association (BPMCA)