



## 1 killed, 30 hurt in AL factional clash

'Quader Mirza's men' attack protest rally in Companiganj; OC, 5 cops among injured; 12 shot; section 144 imposed



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Within three weeks of the killing of journalist Muzakkir during the factional clash of ruling Awami League in Basurhat of Companiganj in Noakhali, an activist of Bangladesh Chhatra League was killed yesterday during another clash between the same groups.

At least 30 people were injured, including an officer-in-charge of a police station and five of his colleagues.

Twelve of the injured sustained gunshot wounds.

The clash erupted between the supporters of Basurhat municipality

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Dredging of the Jamuna going on to make a channel to transport construction materials and equipment for the new rail bridge over the river. Once completed, the 4.8km double-track bridge would be the largest dedicated rail bridge in the country. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## UK variant is here since January

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The UK variant of coronavirus, also known as N501Y.V1, has been found in Bangladesh, health officials told The Daily Star last night.

Prof Tahmina Shirin, director of Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), said, "We found five or six cases of the UK mutation of the virus in early January."

ABM Khurshid Alam, director general of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), yesterday said, "Contact tracing is going on to find out the details of the spread in the country."

Sources at the DGHS said the first case was found on January 5. The person infected had travelled to the country from the UK. Similar cases were also found in Dhaka and Sylhet too.

The DGHS DG stressed on quarantining people coming from the UK or else it could be difficult to contain community transmission.

According to the World Health

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## BANGLADESH-INDIA ROAD CONNECTIVITY

### ONE STEP FORWARD

Hasina, Modi open bridge over Feni river linking Ramgarh with Tripura

STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said political boundaries should not become physical barriers to trade in this region.

"We're in a region which has remained conservative in opening up and where inter-regional trade is far below its potential. I believe political boundaries shouldn't become physical trade barriers," the prime minister said, reports UNB.

The PM made the remark as she along with her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi inaugurated the "Maitri Setu" (Friendship Bridge) over the Feni river in a virtual ceremony yesterday.

The 1.9-kilometre bridge connected Sabroom -- a town in the Indian state of Tripura -- with Ramgarh of Bangladesh.

The Indian PM, while inaugurating the Friendship Bridge, said connectivity is not only strengthening the friendship between India and Bangladesh but also proving to be a strong business link. The entire region is being developed as a trade corridor between Northeast India and Bangladesh, he said, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

Modi said the bridge will improve connectivity of south Assam, Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura with Bangladesh and Southeast Asia.

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“Political boundaries should not become physical barriers to trade

“The bridge will improve connectivity of Tripura, Assam, Mizoram with Bangladesh

## BURIGANGA POLLUTERS

### HC asks Wasa to sever their water supply

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) to snap within next six months water supply connections to those buildings and structures which release sewage wastes directly into the Buriganga river.

Besides, the court heavily rebuked Dhaka Wasa Managing Director Taqsem A Khan for providing water supply connections to those buildings which don't have sewage lines and septic tanks and are directly releasing wastes into the Buriganga and polluting its water.

The HC said there is no provision under the Wasa Act, 1996 and Wasa Rules, 2011 for providing water supply connections to structures not having sewage lines and septic tanks, but the Wasa provided connections to such buildings and structures in violation of the law and rules.

"The activities of the managing director of Dhaka Wasa don't demonstrate that he does not know the law and rules. If he does it [providing water supply connections] being aware of the law and rules, it is a punishable offence," the HC bench of Justice Gobinda Chandra Tagore and Justice Mohammad Ullah said.

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## HC upholds Salim's 10-year jail for graft

Strikes down 3 yrs for concealing wealth info

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday upheld a lower court's verdict that convicted and sentenced Haji Md Salim to 10 years in prison in a corruption case filed by the ACC during the military-backed caretaker government in 2007.

It also upheld a fine of Tk 10 lakh imposed on the Awami League lawmaker from Dhaka-7 for amassing wealth worth Tk 14.65 crore beyond known sources of his income.

The HC, however, scrapped another part of the lower court's judgement delivered in 2008 which handed three years'

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## PBI presses rape charges against ASI, 4 others

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) has pressed charges against five persons, including an assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of police, yesterday in a rape case filed at end of October last year.

The charge-sheeted accused are Mohammad Rahenul Islam, an ASI of

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People queuing up in front of Mugda Medical College and Hospital in the capital for Covid-19 test. The country recently witnessed a rise in the number of coronavirus cases. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HUQ

## SEAMLESS CONNECTIVITY WITH INDIA

### It can boost nat'l income by 17pc

Can slash cost of doing business: World Bank

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seamless transport connectivity between Bangladesh and India has the potential to increase Bangladesh's national income by as much as 17 percent and India's by 8 percent, reducing the cost of doing business significantly.

This was stated in the World Bank report titled "Connecting to Thrive: Challenges and Opportunities of Transport Integration in Eastern South Asia," launched yesterday.

"Geographically, Bangladesh's location makes it a strategic gateway to India, Nepal, Bhutan, and other East Asian countries. Bangladesh can also become an economic powerhouse by improving regional trade, transit

- RECOMMENDATIONS**
- Standardise infrastructure design
  - Improve infrastructure along regional corridors
  - Ensure competition in transport service markets
  - Deploy ICT infrastructure in all ports
  - Develop off-border custom clearance facilities
  - Connect local markets to regional corridors
  - Remove logistics bottlenecks in export-oriented value chains
  - Improve women's participation in export-oriented agricultural value chains

and logistics networks," Mercy Tembon, WB country director for Bangladesh and Bhutan, said at a virtual press conference.

At present, bilateral trade accounts for only about 10 percent of Bangladesh's trade and a mere 1 percent of India's trade, the report said.

While trade between India and Bangladesh has increased substantially over the last decade, it is estimated to be \$10 billion below its current potential, it pointed out noting that high tariffs and para-tariffs remain as major trade barriers.

As Indian trucks are not allowed to transit through Bangladesh, cargo must be transloaded, adding to transport and trade costs. On average, crossing the India-Bangladesh

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a new generation bank comes into operation



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