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HIGH-SPEED DHAKA-CTG TRAIN

2 Chinese firms show interest

Willing to jointly manage funds for the \$11.4b project

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Two Chinese companies have expressed interest in forming a joint venture to construct, operate and manage funds for a proposed high-speed railway on the Dhaka-Chattogram route.

They proposed to be engaged in the multi-billion-dollar project on the basis of a public private partnership (PPP) under a government-to-government initiative.

The companies -- China Railway Construction Corporation (CRCC) and China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) -- sent the proposal to the railways ministry through the Chinese embassy in Dhaka and the PPP Authority, railways sources said.

Bangladesh Railway yesterday held a meeting over the proposal with its Director General Dharendra Nath Mazumder in the chair. It was decided in the meeting to seek the Economic Relations Division's (ERD's) opinion about the proposal, meeting sources said.

The feasibility study of the first high-speed rail, commissioned by Bangladesh Railway, has already been completed. The route has also been selected and a draft report on the detailed design of the "passenger-dedicated" SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



A herd of spotted deer stares at the photographer at Kotka point, one of the beautiful tourist spots in the Sundarbans, in the early morning of Tuesday. They came out of the deep forest in search of food.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Mashrafe on young global leaders' list

STAR REPORT

Former Bangladesh ODI captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is among 10 leaders from South Asia named in Weforum's Young Global Leaders list.

The cricketer, who became an elected member of parliament (MP) from his home district of Narail during the last national elections, has been recognised for his work in helping people move out of the poverty trap in his hometown in the southwestern district.

"He launched the Narail Express Foundation, which looks to achieve six goals: offer modern facilities for citizens and a specialized SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

Rescued baby elephant sent to safari park

It was found wandering after getting isolated from herd in Teknaf

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chattogram

Forest Department in Cox's Bazar rescued an elephant calf that is believed to have excluded from elephant herd in Shaplapur area of Teknaf.

The three-month-old female calf, weighing 121 kg, was handed over to safari park authorities on Wednesday. It was found abandoned beside Monkhal canal under Shaplapur beat office of Huiyakkong range of Cox's Bazar South Forest Division.

Humayun Kabir, divisional forest officer (DFO) of Cox's Bazar South Forest Division, told The Daily Star that the calf was standing for long near Monkhal canal against which there is a steep hill.

"We think the calf has fallen from the hill and could not make it due to steepness of the hill," he said, adding that they rescued the baby elephant around 2:00pm on Wednesday and were feeding it milk and bananas.

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ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Will Bangabandhu call on Yahya?

MARCH 12, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

YAHYA'S DHAKA VISIT ANNOUNCED

BBC today reported that Pakistan President Yahya Khan would visit Dhaka soon with a "package deal" to resolve the ongoing crisis in East Pakistan. The report also indicated a handover of power to elected representatives before the commencement of the National Assembly session.

Kamal Hossain in his memoir shares that around March 12, 1971, a senior military officer arrived from Rawalpindi and wanted to see Tajuddin Ahmed. Kamal Hossain reported it to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who asked him to see the officer. The officer asked whether Bangabandhu would see Yahya if the president were to come to Dhaka and whether the meeting could be held at the president's house. The reason behind the second question was that earlier Bangabandhu had



refused to meet Tikka Khan at both Government House and the cantonment. Bangabandhu had said that if Tikka Khan wanted to see him he should call on him at his residence. Kamal Hossain immediately reported to Bangabandhu, who directed that the officer should be informed that if Yahya came to Dhaka, Bangabandhu would see him and that the venue of the meeting could be the president's house, although Yahya was quite welcome to visit him at his residence. [Kamal Hossain, Bangladesh: Quest for Freedom and Justice, UPL, 2013, pg.91] THE MILITARY BUILD-UP CONTINUES The fly-in of troops from West Pakistan into Dhaka continued

SEE PAGE 5 COL 3

TIPU MURDER

Arrest warrant issued against Anis, 3 others

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday once again issued non-bailable arrest warrants for four prosecution witnesses, including a brother of the army chief Gen Aziz Ahmed, for their failure to appear before it in a case filed over the murder of Sayeed Ahmed Tipu.

Tipu, another brother of Gen Aziz, was murdered in the capital 22 years ago.

The four absentee witnesses are Anis Ahmed, brother of the army chief, Md Kamrul, Md Alauddin, and Md Nizam Uddin.

The tribunal set April 1 for the next hearing in the case.

The same court on February 18 had issued arrest warrants for the four witnesses for their failure to comply with multiple court orders to appear before it.

The court had also issued a letter that day, asking the officer-in-charge

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Women may have ruled bronze-age Spain



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

An "exceptionally rich" burial site in southeastern Spain has raised questions about whether women may have ruled a class-based society located on the Iberian peninsula until 1550 BC.

Archaeologists have been studying the early bronze age El Argar site, at La Almoloya in the Spanish region of Murcia, since 2013.

The site contains some "extraordinary" ancient objects, including important emblematic items that were exclusively present in female graves. This suggests women had potentially prominent

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2 killed, 15 hurt as bus catches fire in Cumilla

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Two people were killed and 15 others injured as a bus caught fire on Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Cumilla's Daudkandi yesterday evening.

The incident happened when the bus heading for Chandpur's Matlab from Dhaka reached Gouripur bus stand area around 6:30pm, said Jahirul Islam, officer-in-charge of

SEE PAGE 5 COL 3



PRAYER TIMING MARCH 12

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5-05 12-30 4-30 6-12 7-30
JAMAAT 5-40 1-15 4-45 6-15 8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

AL lawmaker Samad Chy dies from Covid-19

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Sylhet-3 lawmaker Mahmud Us Samad Chowdhury died of coronavirus yesterday.



He was 66.

The parliamentarian breathed his last around 2:00pm while undergoing treatment at the intensive care unit (ICU) of United Hospital in Dhaka, said Julhas Ahmed, personal secretary to the MP.

He left behind his wife, son and a host of relatives and well-wishers.

The MP received his first dose of coronavirus vaccine on February 10 at the Parliament Complex and no adverse effect was reported that time.

Julhas earlier told The Daily Star that the lawmaker recently went to his constituency on a regular visit and was feeling unwell for a few days.

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Ignoring risks, a motorcyclist carrying a woman who has two kids in her lap, one of them is sleeping. This kind of disregard for safety is often seen on streets. The photo was taken in Elephant Road area in the capital recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

COUP IN MYANMAR

12 protesters shot dead

Junta accuses Suu Kyi of taking bribes; rights group blames army for using 'battlefield weapons'

AGENCIES

At least 12 protesters were shot dead in Myanmar yesterday as the junta reacted to international condemnation of its crackdown by claiming ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi had accepted hefty illegal payments.

The bloodshed came hours after the UN Security Council had called for restraint from the army, which has been trying to put down daily anti-coup protests and paralysing strikes since it took power on Feb 1.

Among the dead were eight people killed in the central town of Myaing when security forces fired on a protest, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) said.

In Myanmar's biggest city, Yangon, protester Chit Min Thu was killed in the North Dagon district. His wife, Aye Myat Thu, told Reuters he had insisted on joining the protests despite her appeals for him to stay home for the sake of their son.

"He said it's worth dying for," she said through her tears. "He is worried about people not joining the protest. If so, democracy will not return to the country."

Adding corruption charges to the accusations against Suu Kyi could mean she faces a harsher penalty. She currently faces four comparatively minor charges - including illegally importing six walkie talkie radios and flouting coronavirus restrictions.

The junta spokesman, Brigadier General Zaw Min PHOTO ON PAGE 2 SEE PAGE 10 COL 1