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PDs of 63 RHD projects changed

'One PD one project' yet to be achieved

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

In a rare move, the road transport and bridges ministry has changed the directors of 63 projects of the Roads and Highways Department (RHD), aiming to facilitate their quick implementation.

The ministry made the decision "as a part of its efforts" to execute the prime minister's directive to ensure "one project, one project director," officials said.

However, even after the major reshuffle, several project directors (PDs) have to deal with more than one project.

The ministry issued 11 separate circulars in this regard last week, around two months after the deadline to inform Prime Minister's Office about the measures.

As per the existing rules, each development project will have a permanent project director.

In a letter sent to different ministries and agencies, including the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED), on January 20 this year, the PMO said it has found that an official of the RHD was working as PD of 14 projects.

Two officials were PDs of 13 projects each, five officials were PDs of 10 or more projects each, while 38 officials of the Local Government Division were PDs of at least two or more projects each, reads an IMED document.

The PMO said similar pictures were found in the ministries of power, energy and mineral resources, railways, SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



Vehicular movement in the capital was almost normal yesterday, during a "proper lockdown" that was imposed by the government to curb coronavirus spread. The photo was taken in the capital's Banani area.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Farmers in haor areas reap in joy

Md AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Bumper production of Boro paddy has brought smiles on the faces of farmers in the haor region of Netrakona and Kishoreganj.

Harvesting is going on there.

"I cultivated the paddy on around 30 acres of land this year and I have got on average 60 to 70 maunds of paddy per acre this year," said Mozammel Haque, a farmer of Nurpur Boali village in Netrakona's Khaliajuri.

Another farmer of the same area Faruq Chowdhury said he grew the paddy on around 10 acres and had a better production compared to the previous year.

Farmers started harvesting the paddy towards the end of last month and will continue it till this month, said Habibur Rahman, upazila agricultural officer in Khaliajuri.

Unlike last year, farmers of most of the areas are SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

Tigers' quest to turn it around

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's quest to brush aside all the negativities surrounding them will begin today as they take on Sri Lanka in the first of two Tests at the Pallekele International Stadium in Kandy. The game is scheduled to begin at 10.30am Bangladesh time.

Things have not gone well for Bangladesh in recent past as the Mominul Haque-led side travelled to Sri Lanka on the back of eight straight international defeats across formats. The form in the longer version is perhaps the worst as the Tigers won just one of their last nine matches.

The visitors will be under pressure after suffering a 2-0 whitewash against a relatively inexperienced West Indies side at home in their last series. However, according to Mominul, there is no pressure on him or his team.

The selectors had to wait until the day before the first Test to announce a 15-member squad, featuring four seamers and two specialist spinners.

In absence of star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, the responsibility to guide the batting department will be on the shoulders of Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

LONG RIDE FOR TREATMENT Jannat doing better after surgery



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The condition of seven-month-old Jannat has improved significantly after her surgery at Rangpur Medical College Hospital, where she reached after a 110km ride on her father's battery-run rickshaw on Saturday.

Talking to The Daily Star at RMCH yesterday, Mahfuzul Haque Manik, a paediatric surgeon of the hospital, said the hour-long surgery was conducted Monday afternoon, led by him.

He said the intestine of the child was tangled, which was the key reason for her flood dysentery. SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

Youth held over rape of woman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Police yesterday arrested a youth in a case filed over gang-raping a female garment worker in Gazipur's Sreepur upazila.

The arrestee Md Sultan is a resident of Mulyeey area in the upazila.

Quoting the woman, 32, police said she works at a garment factory in the area and lives in a rented room near the factory.

In the early hours of yesterday, her landlord drove her out of the room alleging that she was involved in "anti-social activities".

As the woman was roaming on a street, one of her neighbours named Mizan Fakir offered her to stay at his home around 3:30am and she agreed. Mizan then allegedly raped her there, said police, quoting the victim.

Later, three of Mizan's friends - Md. Sultan, Md Saddam, and Md, Rana SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Fleeing by the thousands

APRIL 21, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

REFUGEES JAM BONGAON CAMPS

Driven by the Pakistani troops' genocide in Bangladesh, the influx of evacuees had been so great in Bongaon in 24-Parganas district that admission into one of the three camps had been stopped by the state government and a fourth camp was being opened. Over 21,000 refugees had been given shelter in these three camps. As the largest number of refugees enter through the Petrapole border, a camp close to the border outpost registered more than 8,000 persons today.

The number of refugees overall was put at 200,000, with half that number crossing the border in the last three days, reported Reuters.

PAKISTAN ACCUSES INDIA OF ATTACK

The Pakistani government said tonight that Indian troops had been firing from across the border at a Pakistani post, the border post near Hilli, all day, and it called on India to "stop immediately its unprovoked attack. Otherwise the responsibility for the consequences will lie with the Indian authorities," the Pakistani government said.

No comment was immediately forthcoming from the Indian authorities on the latest charge.

AN INTERNAL MATTER?

New York Times in an editorial titled "An internal matter?" published today, severely criticised the US government's position that the Pakistani military government's slaughter of democratically SEE PAGE 10 COL 3



WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX Bangladesh goes from 151st to 152nd

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has slipped down a notch in this year's World Press Freedom Index, which is prepared by Reporters Without Borders, also known as Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF).

This year, Bangladesh ranked 152nd out of 180 countries, while its position was 151st last year, according to the report released yesterday.

The index is calculated based on many indicators, but the one carrying more weight is "abuse", which measures the level of abuses and violence against journalists.

"The longer that journalists [professional and non-professional] are imprisoned, the more their imprisonment penalises the country concerned," the methodology section of the report states.

Bangladesh has the 27th highest "abuse score" in the world -- however India and Pakistan's abuse scores are higher by at least 10 points each.

Other factors that are taken into consideration include the degree to which opinions are represented in the media, media independence, environment of self-censorship, legislative framework, SEE PAGE 10 COL 3



The number of coronavirus cases and deaths are increasing but people are still callously gathering at places without following health guidelines. This photo of a long queue at Dhakeshwari branch of Janata Bank was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SUMON

CORONAVIRUS DEATHS India suffers worst day

Many big cities report far bigger cremations, burial numbers

AGENCIES

India, the country currently being hit hardest by the pandemic, yesterday reported its worst daily death toll, with large parts of the country now under lockdown amid a fast-rising second wave of infections.

The health ministry said 1,761 people had died in the past day, bringing India's toll to 180,530, still well below the 567,538 deaths reported in the United States, though experts believe India's actual deaths are far more than the official count.

The world's second most populous country is grappling with its biggest public health emergency after it lowered its guard when coronavirus infections fell to a multi-month low in February, health experts and officials say.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Protection has said all travel should be avoided to India, while Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson cancelled an official trip to New Delhi that had been scheduled for next week, and his government said it will add India to its travel "red list".

At least 53 passengers on a flight from New Delhi to Hong Kong have tested positive for coronavirus, authorities said yesterday, as the Chinese financial hub introduced an emergency ban on arrivals from India over a new wave of cases.

The passengers flew into Hong Kong on a flight run by Indian operator Vistara on April 4.

Several major Indian cities are already reporting far larger numbers of cremations and burials under coronavirus SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



PRAYER TIMING APRIL 21
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:08 12:45 4:45 6:26 8:00
JAMAAT 4:18 1:15 5:00 6:36 8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING
RAMADAN APRIL SEHRI IFTAR
8 21 6:26
9 22 4:07 6:27
10 23 4:06 6:27