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PADMA RAIL LINK Line laying to start in July

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY, back from PADMA BRIDGE SITE

Authorities of the Padma Bridge Rail Link Project (PBRLP) are likely to start installation of rail track on the Mawa-Bhanga section from July in a major development for the fast-track project being implemented by Bangladesh Railway.

They would be ready to install the rail track on the Padma bridge within October this year and it would take up to six months to complete the work, said officials.

However, before starting the work, Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA), which is executing the long-cherished bridge project, has to hand over the bridge to BR's contractor for the work.

But the BBA may take up to February or March to complete their work before handing over the bridge, and in that case, it would be tough for BR to finish their work within June next year, the new deadline to open the bridge for public, said officials.

Meanwhile, Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan yesterday said they are hopeful of starting railway service on the Mawa-Bhanga section, which is a priority section, when the Padma bridge will be opened for public likely in June next year.

The minister and top BR officials, including its Director General Dharendra Nath Mazumder, and officials of the project and contractor firm, yesterday visited the project site one day after the railway viaduct at the Mawa end was connected with the main Padma bridge after the last span of the viaduct was set up on Monday.

The BR is implementing the project to connect the capital with Jashore with a 169-km rail line over the under-

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A mobile court of Dhaka Metropolitan Police conducting a raid at the Chandrima market in the capital yesterday. It fined shop owners and customers who did not wear face masks and follow health guidelines to prevent the spread of Covid.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

2 held under DSA for gambling on IPL

A first in the country

STAR CORRESPONDENT

Two people in Lalmonirhat were arrested on Monday night in a case filed under the Digital Security Act on charges of gambling.

The arrestees are Suzan Chandra Saha, 32, and Shahin Islam, 27.

Shah Alam, officer-in-charge of Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station, claimed that, for the first time in Bangladesh, a case was filed under the DSA against people for gambling.

The charges brought against the two were for committing an illegal e-transaction while betting on Indian Premier League matches using phone apps.

According to the DSA's section 30, if any person without legal authority, makes an e-transaction over electronic and digital means from any bank, insurance or any other financial institution or any organisation providing mobile money service; or makes any e-transaction though it is, from time to time, declared illegal by the Government or Bangladesh Bank, then such an act shall be an offence.

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HC directs S Alam to pay Tk 5 lakh each to victims' families

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed S Alam Group, one of the owners of SS Power I Plant in Chattogram's Banshkhali upazila, to immediately give Tk 5 lakh to each of the families of the seven victims who were killed after police opened fire during a demonstration by workers on April 17.

In response to two writ petitions, the HC asked the deputy commissioner and the superintendent of police of Chattogram to submit their inquiry reports to it in 45 days.

S Alam Group has also been ordered to submit a report on what measures it has taken to compensate the families of the deceased and injured and also for their treatment to the HC in 45 days.

The HC directed the authorities concerned of the government and S Alam Group to ensure that any labour or person in that area was not harassed.

The court also issued a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain why a directive should not be given to them to form a judicial inquiry committee to probe the incident.

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ROAD TO FREEDOM
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

War with India possible, says Pakistani general

MAY 5, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

AWAMI LEAGUE ACCUSED

The Pakistani government said today that news of slaughter carried out by Awami League members in East Pakistan before March 25 "has been kept strictly secret for fear of reprisals in West Pakistan".

An official statement said "thousands of bodies have so far been found in Chittagong and Khulna alone". It added that "a large number of casualties" has also been reported from three other areas.

The eight-page statement recapitulated the official government version of the East Pakistan crisis.

'WAR WITH INDIA POSSIBLE'

The chief of Pakistan's military intelligence service portrayed his nation today as facing large Indian military forces along the frontiers and said he could not discount the possibility of war.

Maj Gen Mohammad Akbar Khan told a group of foreign news correspondents that India had moved two and a half divisions of men (a division has about 30,000 men), mountain and airborne brigades, fighter, bomber and air transport units and her navy to supplement Indian forces already close to Pakistan's border.

He said with the Indian Army's regular strength around East Pakistan's borders, India's total army strength there was more than five divisions with a sixth in readiness nearby.

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COLLEGE GIRL'S DEATH DMCH team completes pry post-mortem

Declines to share findings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Doctors at Dhaka Medical College's forensic medicine department have completed the primary post-mortem on the body of female college student, which was recovered from her Gulshan flat on April 26.

Dr Mohammad Maksud, head of the department, however, declined to disclose any findings, saying that the information was confidential.

Contacted, Sudip Chakrabarty, deputy commissioner (Gulshan division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, yesterday said Gulshan police had not received the report yet.

The primary post-mortem report will cover the physical analysis of the human remains. There will be no details. We will have to wait for the final post-

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The Gates split after 27 years

Charitable foundation to remain intact



REUTERS, Seattle

Billionaire benefactors Bill and Melinda Gates, co-founders of one of the world's largest private charitable foundations, filed for divorce on Monday after 27 years of marriage but pledged to continue their philanthropic work together.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has become one of the most powerful and influential forces in global public health, spending more than \$50 billion over the past two decades to bring a business approach to combating poverty and disease.

The Gates have backed widely praised programs in malaria and polio eradication, child nutrition and vaccines. The foundation last year committed some \$1.75 billion to Covid-19 relief.

In a joint petition for dissolution of marriage, the couple

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PRAYER TIMING MAY 5

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 3-59 12-45 5-00 6-33 8-00
JAMAAT 4-09 1-15 5-15 6-43 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN MAY SEHRI IFTAR				
22	5	6:33		
23	6	3:53	6:33	
24	7	3:52	6:34	

SUNDARBANS FIRE Fire doused after 30 hours

PARITHA CHAKRABORTY, Bagerhat

After 30 hours of frantic efforts, the fire at the Sundarban's (East Forest Range) Sharankhola Range was extinguished around 5:00pm yesterday.

The fire service officials, forest department members, community patrol group (CPG) volunteers, and locals jointly conducted operations to douse the fire that broke out on Monday noon.

The authorities, however, were yet to confirm the damage caused by the fire.

According to locals, at least five acres of forest were destroyed in the Daser Varani area inside the forest because of the fire.

On February 8 this year, three decimals of forest land were gutted by another fire in Chandpai Ranch of the forest. In the last 20 years, at least 25 cases of fire were reported in the Sundarban.

Locals expressed anger
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An elderly man from Chandpur comes to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital in the capital with breathing complications. For better oxygen supply, he was shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Later, he required ICU support for which he was being taken to DNCC Dedicated Covid Hospital in the capital's Mohakhali. Such are the ordeals many patients have to endure every day. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

India's Covid cases top 20m

Health ministry official says infections in some regions levelling out

AGENCIES

India's coronavirus caseload topped 20 million yesterday as the pandemic continued to wreak havoc on the country's hospitals and the opposition leader said a nationwide lockdown was now the only way out.

Cricket officials suspended the money-spinning Indian Premier League (IPL) as the pandemic spirals out of control, with the country adding 10 million cases in just over four months, after taking more than 10 months to reach the first 10 million.

With 3.45 million active cases, India recorded 357,229 new infections over the last 24 hours, while deaths rose by 3,449 to 222,408, health ministry data showed.

With hospitals running out of beds and oxygen and morgues and crematoria overflowing, experts say the actual numbers could be five to 10 times higher.

According to a Reuters tally, total infections were more than 20.2 million, second only to the United States.

"The only way to stop the spread of corona now is a full lockdown ... GOI's inaction is killing many innocent people," opposition Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said on Twitter, referring to the government.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, widely criticised for allowing religious festivals and political gatherings attended by hundreds of thousands of largely unmasked people, is reluctant to impose a national lockdown for fear of the economic fallout, but several states have imposed social curbs.

The eastern state of Bihar ordered a lockdown until
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