



RAILWAY PROJECTS' REVISIONS Officials blame pandemic

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shrugging off their responsibilities, the railway authorities have blamed the Covid-19 situation for the wholesale revision of the railway projects that are being implemented to improve services.

"There are valid reasons for the delays. However, I have been making field visits and trying to complete all the projects on time after taking charge of the ministry," Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan said at a programme yesterday.

"We left no stone unturned and hope to complete the projects timely," he said in reply to a query.

Salim Reza, secretary at the railways ministry, and Dharendra Nath Mazumder, director general of Bangladesh Railway, echoed his views.

Almost half of the 39 ongoing projects of the BR will have to be revised as their deadlines will expire by the end of the current fiscal year, thanks to poor implementation.

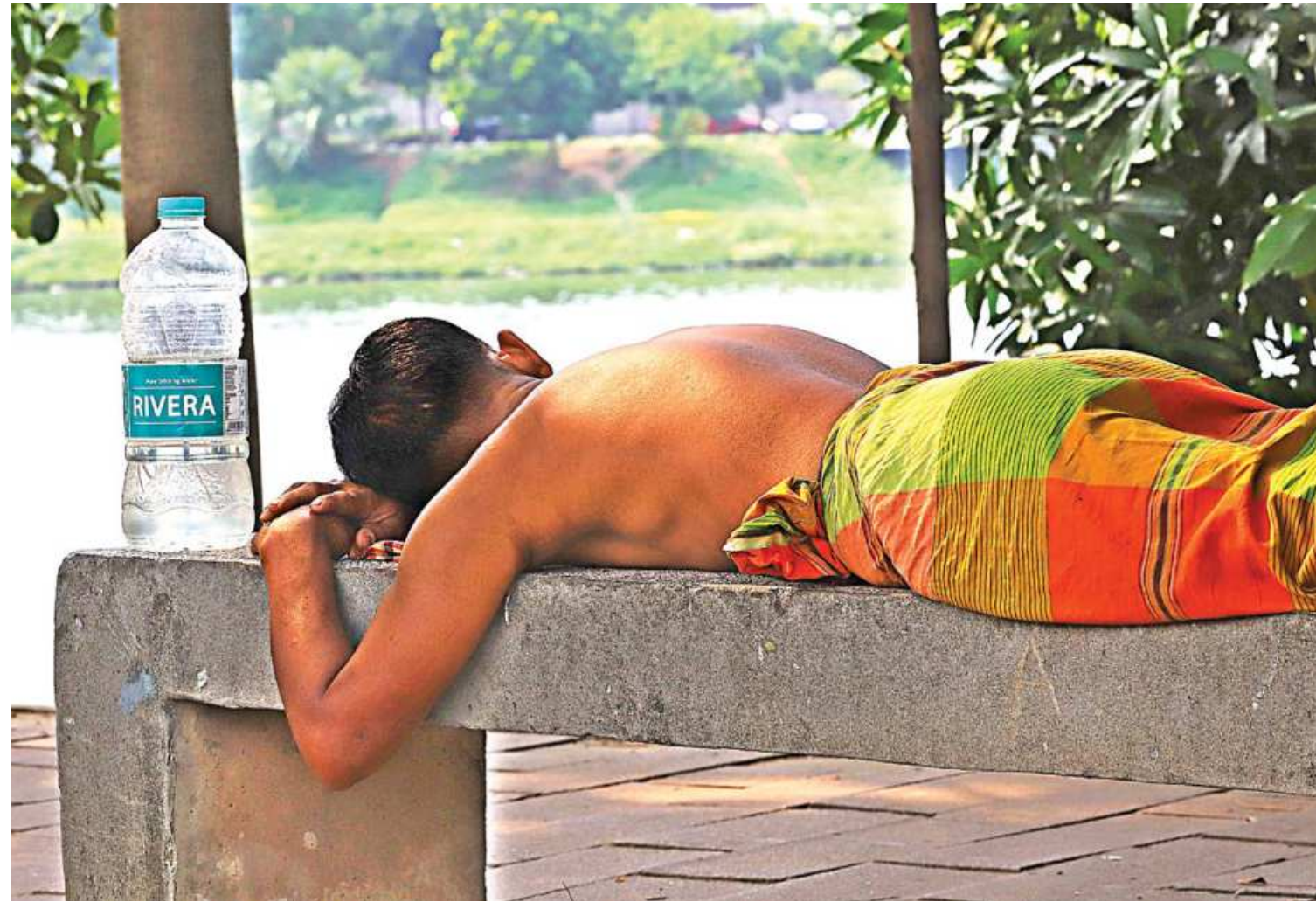
This will push up costs of many of the projects, aimed at improving services of the struggling railways.

The railways minister and the high officials were talking to the media after the signing of a contract on a project taken up for constructing a 23.90-km broad-gauge rail line, including a loop line, from Faridpur's Madhukhali to Magura.

The Tk 1,202.49-crore project was supposed to be implemented between May 2018 and April next year. But it ran into a snag and the physical work is going to start three years after its approval.

Yesterday, the BR signed 18-month contracts with two China-Bangladesh joint-venture companies for the project, meaning the authorities have to extend the deadline for its completion.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5



Exhausted in the hot and humid weather, a man takes a nap on a park bench under a tree in the capital's Hatirjheel yesterday. Mercury has been in the 30's over the last few days causing people, especially the poor, to suffer.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

'BENEFIT FRAUD' Govt officials reimburse man after punishment

SANAD SAHA, Narayanj

The Narayanj district administration reimbursed some of the money a man spent for distributing relief among 100 people as punishment for seeking government food assistance.

The executive magistrate, who handed down the punishment, had claimed that seventy-five-year-old Farid Ahmed Khan resorted to benefit fraud.

Locals, however, said the man, along with his family members, lives from hand to mouth and that the punishment became a huge burden on the person struggling to survive.

Farid's wife Hiron Begum said they had to borrow and spend around Tk 75,000 to arrange the food distribution.

Talking to The Daily Star last night, Farid said he got Tk 60,000. The district administration said the remaining Tk 15,000 would be given later, he added.

Farid is a resident of Narayanj city's West Dewbhog area and works at a hosiery factory in Nayamat area.

The government has recently introduced a helpline -- 333 -- to provide food assistance to the poor, who are affected by the pandemic and ongoing lockdown.

Hearing this, Farid called the helpline and sought food assistance.

In response, Arifa Jahura, Narayanj Sadar upazila nirbahi officer and executive magistrate, visited Farid's house on May 20.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

SHAHINUDDIN MURDER Another suspect killed in 'gunfight'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another accused in Shahinuddin murder case was killed in a "gunfight" with detectives in the capital's Pallabi area early yesterday.

The deceased, Monir, 21, took part in the killing of Shahinuddin on May 16 in front of his son in Pallabi, police said.

The man was injured in the "gunfight" around 2:30am inside Sagufta Housing area. On information, a police team took him to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead, said Aklima Akter, a sub-inspector of Pallabi Police Station.

A text sent by Dhaka Metropolitan Police's media wing said a team of detectives arrested Monir near Pallabi Eidgah Maidan around 9:00pm on Saturday.

Monir was killed during exchange of bullets between law enforcers and his cohorts as the detectives took him along to recover firearms in Sagufta Housing area, it added.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Yahya's appeal for US support

MAY 24, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

YAHYA'S LETTER TO NIXON

In a letter dated May 24, 1971, Pakistan President Yahya Khan expressed his gratitude towards American President Richard Nixon and said, "It is gratifying to learn that you share our view that it is to no one's advantage to permit the situation in East Pakistan to be internationalised and that any foreign intervention in this situation could create new problems and compound the difficulty of securing an ultimate settlement."

Yahya reaffirmed his resolve to transfer power to a civilian government at the earliest possible time. He said, "For this purpose, I have initiated, once again, consultations with political leaders and elected representatives of the people."

Yahya accused India of arranging a hijacking incident and said, "[Through this] India sought justification for its decision to ban overflights of our aircraft. Thus, a situation was created which not only imposed a heavy financial burden on Pakistan but also made the task of a political settlement between the two wings of our country more difficult."

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



28 more die from Covid, 1,354 get infected

UNB, Dhaka

As Bangladesh battles with the Covid-19 pandemic, its health authorities recorded 28 more deaths and 1,354 cases in 24 hours until yesterday morning.

The infection rate rose to 8.90 percent from Saturday's 8.41 percent while the mortality rate stood at 1.57 percent, said a handout issued by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The new cases of infections were recorded after testing 15,205 samples. With the fresh deaths during the period, the coronavirus fatalities rose to 12,376 in the country.

The total caseload now stands at 789,080 with the new ones, the handout added.

Titanic replica now being built in China



CNN ONLINE

For those who have always wondered what it would've been like to be a passenger on the Titanic, a theme park in China is set to offer the closest experience one can get.

A massive replica of the sunken ocean liner is now under construction in Daying County in Sichuan province.

Called the "Unsinkable Titanic," the ship is the exact same size as the original -- 269.06 metres (882 feet) in length and 28.19 metres (92 feet) wide.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3



PRAYER TIMING MAY 24

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

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A man peeps into a ticket counter of the almost empty Chattogram Railway Station yesterday to see if tickets were being sold. Rumours started spreading in the port city yesterday that the government would allow inter-district public transport that had been suspended to curb the spread of coronavirus. The restrictions were partially lifted yesterday. Story on page 1

PHOTO: RAJIB RAHMAN

INDIA COVID VARIANT

Pfizer, Astra jabs highly effective

Says UK study; Delhi to ease restrictions as cases drop

AGENCIES

The Pfizer-BioNTech and Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines have been found to be highly effective against the coronavirus variant that was first identified in India, according to a study by Public Health England (PHE).

The Pfizer vaccine was 88-percent effective and the AstraZeneca jab was 60-percent effective against the B1617.2 strain after the second dose.

Both the vaccines were more effective against the so-called "Kent" strain -- B.1.1.7, the Covid-19 variant

dominant in Britain -- with Pfizer being 93-percent effective while the AstraZeneca jab was 66-percent effective over the same period.

However, they were only 33-percent effective three weeks after the first dose.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock described the outcome as "groundbreaking," while PHE said it expects to see even higher levels of effectiveness against hospital admission and death.

"This new evidence is groundbreaking and proves just how valuable our Covid-19 vaccination

programme is in protecting the people we love," Hancock told broadcasters.

"I'm increasingly confident that we're on track for the roadmap, because this data shows that the vaccine, after two doses, works just as effectively (against the Indian variant)," he added.

Earlier this month, the World Health Organization (WHO) dubbed the India's B1617.2 strain a "variant of global concern."

The study, which took place between April 5 and May 16, found that both the vaccines were 33-percent

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
জাতীয় রাজস্ব বোর্ড

কাস্টমস ই-পেমেন্ট বাধ্যতামূলককরণ সংক্রান্ত গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

কাস্টমস কম্পিউটার সিস্টেম (ASYCUDA World) এর মাধ্যমে ব্যবস্থিত আমদানি-রপ্তানি পণ্যচালান সংশ্লিষ্ট দুই লাখ টাকার বেশী রাজস্ব (শুল্ক-করাদি, ফি, চার্জ, প্রভৃতি) আগামী ০১ জুলাই, ২০২১ থেকে এবং পরিমাণ নির্বিশেষে রাজস্ব আগামী ০১ জানুয়ারি, ২০২২ থেকে ইলেকট্রনিক মাধ্যমে (ই-পেমেন্ট) পরিশোধ বাধ্যতামূলক করা হয়েছে।

এ বিষয়ে আমদানি-রপ্তানিকারক, ব্যাংক, সিএন্ডএফ এজেন্টসহ সংশ্লিষ্ট সকল স্টেকহোল্ডারগণকে প্রয়োজনীয় প্রস্তুতি সম্পন্ন করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

প্রয়োজনে যোগাযোগ করুনঃ

স্ব-স্ব ব্যাংক	
সোনালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড:	: ০১৭১৩-৭৫৮৫১১ (২৪/৭) : ০২-২২৩৩৫৬৩৭৪ (সকাল ১০টা-সন্ধ্যা ৬টা)
বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক:	: ০২-৯৫৩০৭৫৬ (সকাল ১০টা-সন্ধ্যা ৬টা)
জাতীয় রাজস্ব বোর্ড:	: ০১৭৪২-২৫৪৫৩৭ (সকাল ৯টা-বিকাল ৫টা)

National Board of Revenue, Bangladesh
জাতীয় রাজস্ব বোর্ড, বাংলাদেশ

জিডি-১০৩৫

