




Joydebpur-Ishwardi Double-Line Project ERD urged to budge China on funding

JAGARAN CHAKMA
and TUHIN SHUBHRA
ADHIKARY

The railways ministry recently requested the Economic Relations Division to urge the Chinese government to re-evaluate its decision to not finance the Joydebpur-Ishwardi double-line project.



Further deepening the crisis, the Chinese contractors for this project and the Tk 16,104.45-crore Akhaura-Sylhet dual gauge project said they would not work in the projects after the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) reduced the amounts to be paid to the contractors.

The ministry also explained the points raised by the Chinese authorities as reasons for not funding the Tk 14,250.61-crore project, making the railways expansion project uncertain.

Dhaka and Beijing signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Dhaka in October 2016 to implement several infrastructure projects with Chinese assistance.

After a meeting on June 9, Bangladesh Railways (BR) wrote to the railways ministry mentioning the explanations.

The two aforesaid projects are among those projects.

The ministry on August 4 wrote to the ERD mentioning the explanations, said officials familiar with the development.

Both the projects were approved by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnc) over two years ago. The Chinese contractors were selected through direct procurement method without any competitive bidding.

An ERD official on Thursday confirmed receiving the railways ministry's letter and said the letter would soon be forwarded to Chinese embassy in Dhaka.

The latest developments will result in further delay in the implementation of the two projects and prolong people's wait for better train services from the capital to the north-east and north-west regions, officials told this newspaper.

On March 29, the Chinese embassy in Dhaka said that the Chinese government would not fund the project because of a "lack of in-depth preliminary work and insufficient feasibility study".

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



People throng Patenga Beach in Chattogram city yesterday as it was a holiday. Law enforcers were not seen taking any action against the visitors. Covid restrictions, imposed on April 1, are still in place at tourist destinations and they are to be withdrawn on August 19.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Two new dinosaur species found in China



CNN ONLINE

Scientists have confirmed the discovery of two massive new dinosaur species in northwest China -- some of the first vertebrates uncovered in the region, according to a new study published Thursday.

A number of fossils have emerged from China's northwest region in recent years, including Xinjiang and the Turpan-Hami Basin. The fossils include a number of pterosaurs (flying reptiles), preserved eggs and embryos -- as well as fossil fragments of spinal vertebrae and rib cages, which scientists initially identified as belonging to three mystery dinosaurs.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

QUAKE IN HAITI

Death toll rises to 724

At least 2,800 hurt; emergency declared as rescue workers scramble to find survivors in rubble

AFP, Port-Au-Prince

The death toll in Haiti's powerful earthquake jumped to over 700 yesterday as crews desperately dug through collapsed buildings for survivors in the Caribbean nation still reeling from its president's assassination.

At least 724 people were killed in the 7.2-magnitude tremor that struck Saturday about 100 miles (160 kilometers) to the west of the densely populated capital Port-au-Prince, which was devastated in a massive 2010 quake.

Churches, businesses, schools and homes crumbled in Saturday's quake that trapped hundreds of victims under rubble and left at least 2,800 people injured, the country's civil protection agency said in an update.

Heavy damage was reported in the center of the city of Jeremie, home to around 200,000 people and composed primarily of single-story buildings.

The damage in the city of Les Cayes also appeared to be significant, including the collapse of a multi-story hotel.

Amid ongoing fear of aftershocks, virtually the entire population of that city spent Saturday night outdoors, sleeping in front of their homes -- or what was left of them.

Rescue efforts could be hampered by Tropical Storm Grace, which is expected to bring heavy rainfall and possible flash floods to Haiti from

late today, according to the US National Weather Service.

The United States and other nations swiftly pledged support, with President Joe Biden approving "immediate" aid efforts.

USAID head Samantha Power tweeted yesterday that her agency had deployed an urban search and rescue team to join its earthquake disaster response team in Haiti.

She said the 65-person deployment was bringing "specialized tools, equipment & medical supplies to assist in search operations."

Haiti's neighbor the Dominican Republic said it was shipping 10,000 food rations and medical equipment.

Cuba and Ecuador dispatched medical or search-and-rescue teams. Mexico, Chile, Argentina, Peru and Venezuela also offered help, while UN chief Antonio Guterres said the United Nations was "working to support rescue and relief efforts."

Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry, who surveyed the damage via helicopter, declared a state of emergency for one month while calling on the nation to "show solidarity" and not panic.

A 7.0-magnitude quake in January 2010 left much of Port-au-Prince and nearby cities in ruins, killing more than 200,000.

More than 1.5 million Haitians were made homeless in that disaster, which also destroyed 60

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Kennedy terms Pakistani drive genocide

AUGUST 16, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJAN

KENNEDY'S PRESS CONFERENCE

US Senator Edward M Kennedy today denounced Pakistan's military action against Bangladesh as genocide and said the secret trial of Bangladeshi leader Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was "an outrage to every concept of international law".

At a news conference in New Delhi as he ended his weeklong visit to India, the Massachusetts Democrat blamed the Nixon Administration's policy of continued arms aid to Pakistan for the severe damage to United States relations with India.

Kennedy spent most of his time in India visiting the squalid border camps that hold Bangladeshi refugees.

Kennedy -- who came to India in his capacity as chairman of the senate judiciary subcommittee on refugees -- said President Richard Nixon's policy "baffles me and after seeing the results in terms of human misery, I think it's an even greater disaster".

Kennedy further said a political solution to the East Pakistan crisis was possible but he did not pretend to have it.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

187 more die, 6,684 get Covid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of deaths from the novel coronavirus jumped again yesterday after showing a dropping trend over the last five days.

In past 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) reported 187 deaths from Covid-19, which was 178 the day before.

The number of new cases, meanwhile, continued to decline as the DGHS confirmed 6,684 fresh cases yesterday.

The previous day, 6,885 cases were detected across the country.

The positivity rate too keeps going down -- 20.25 percent cases were positive against 33,001 samples tested. The previous day, the positivity rate was 20.66 percent.

With the latest count, the total number of fatalities rose to 24,175, which is 1.7 percent of all cases detected

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

2 children raped in Gazipur, Patuakhali

STAR REPORT

A teenage girl was raped by an unidentified criminal in Gazipur on Saturday and a man was sued over raping a minor domestic help in Patuakhali.

Police in Gazipur said the victim, a seventh-grader of a local madrasa, was sleeping with her grandmother on Friday night at her house in the district's Kapasia upazila.

Around 2:00am early Saturday, three unidentified men stormed into the house, tied the grandmother's hands and legs with rope at gun-point.

Then, the criminals

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 16

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-25 12-45 4-45 6-38 8-00
JAMAT 5-00 1-15 5-00 6-41 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



It appears to be an unpaved road in a rural area but actually it is a street that connects Postogola bridge with Gulistan in the capital. Rain over the last several days has made matters worse. The photo was taken in the Old Dhaka's Mir Hazaribagh area yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Star HEALTHLINE

Covid-19 DISASTER RISK ASSESSMENT IN BANGLADESH

DR MD MASUD ALAM

Bangladesh has been combating Covid-19 for over 17 months. At present, Bangladesh is the second-most affected country in South Asia after India. Bangladesh has constantly shown one of the lowest test rates in the world and it has been inadequate to accurately understand the extent of transmission, particularly outside Dhaka division.

Risk assessment is a multi-disciplinary process -- associated with decision and

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



Hyginex
Instant hand sanitizer

BEACON
Pharmaceuticals Limited