

KABUL SAFE ZONE
Macron says France, UK to push the idea on humanitarian grounds at today's key UNSC meet
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The electric metro train in Mirpur DOHS area during yesterday's maiden run between Pallabi and Uttara. Hundreds of people on the streets, in flats, and rooftops watched the six cars in awe.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

METRO DREAM closer to reality

Uttara-Agargaon section to open by Dec 22 at the latest: Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's first ever metro rail service will launch in December next year, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said yesterday, raising the city dwellers' hope of daily commutes free of tailbacks.

At least, the service between Uttara and Agargaon, a distance of 11.73km, will be operational by the end of 2022, Quader said while inaugurating the beginning of a series of test runs of the metro train on viaduct yesterday.

Uttara-Agargaon is part of the 20.10km route to Motijheel. The Mass Rapid Transit Line-6 or MRT-6, the country's first metro rail service, is being built at a cost of Tk 21,985 crore.

"We hope the prime minister will be able to inaugurate... the metro rail, Padma bridge and Bangabandhu tunnel next year," he said.

Padma bridge will be inaugurated in June. The second mega project to be inaugurated will be the Bangabandhu Tunnel under the Karnaphuli

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ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

Days in custody unaccounted for

Cops showing victims arrested even weeks after actual detentions

ZYMA ISLAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

There is a kind of enforced disappearance where a person is picked up or abducted, vanishes into thin air and is never heard from again.

There is another kind where the person returns but after many months or years.

Then there is a more common form of enforced disappearance.

These are the cases where a person is picked up and kept at a certain location for a few days before being produced before a court as arrested. This leaves a certain number of hours, days, or weeks in custody unaccounted for.

According to the Code of Criminal Procedure (Section 167) an arrestee must be produced before the court within 24 hours of arrest. But as law enforcement agencies, journalists and rights activists know, this stipulation is often flouted.

Rights organisations are rarely able to collect data on this. The phenomenon only recently came under media scrutiny when cartoonist Ahmed Kishore filed a case alleging that he was kept in an unknown location for several days and tortured.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE DISAPPEARED

"They [police] took me to the under-construction BRP [Bhashantek Rehabilitation Project] building and made me climb into the septic tank. I spent the whole day and the whole night there."

FISH TRADER MOSHARRAF CLAIMING HE WAS KEPT IN A SEPTIC TANK FOR 36 HOURS BEFORE BEING SHOWN ARRESTED

But at the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court in Dhaka, stories like these can be picked like fruit in harvesting season.

On the third floor of the court building, a fish trader named Mosharraf narrated how he was

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Bangladesh to be made global aviation hub

Says PM

UNB, Dhaka

Highlighting the potentials of Cox's Bazar, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government wants to turn Bangladesh into a global aviation hub that will help accelerate the country's current economic march forward.

"Considering Bangladesh's geographical position, we want to make the country the centre of global aviation so that our country is greatly benefited economically," she said while inaugurating the breaking ground of the extension of Cox's Bazar Airport runway.

She joined the programme from the Gono Bhaban.

Hasina said the position of Cox's Bazar is very significant.

In recent times, she said Hong Kong, Singapore and Bangkok gained importance while Dubai is currently getting the greater attention. "I can say Cox's Bazar will be



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Use of antibiotics rampant, careless

Finds study on 10 Covid and non-Covid hospitals

MOUJIB AHMED SUJAN

A study has revealed that costly antibiotics are being prescribed injudiciously for treating Covid patients at hospitals, which could lessen effectiveness of the lifesaving drugs in killing bacteria.

Such irrational use of antibiotics is also putting unnecessary financial burden on patients, said researchers involved in the study.

The Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) and the American Society for Microbiology (ASM) jointly conducted the study at five Covid and five non-Covid hospitals in the capital, Chattogram, Rajshahi and Sylhet. Of the hospitals, five are state-run and five private.

Data was collected from May 1 to July 30 this year for the study titled "Antibiotic Usage and Antimicrobial Resistance in Tertiary Care Hospitals of Bangladesh".

Bacteria-fighting drugs known as antibiotics have been helping control and destroy many of the harmful organisms that can make one sick.

But in recent times, overuse and misuse of antibiotics led some strains of bacteria



to make small changes in their DNA and become antibiotic-resistant "superbugs", according to health experts.

This happens mainly due to injudicious use of antibiotic drugs, they said.

As per the AWaRe (Access, Watch and Reserve) classification, antibiotics are classified into three groups -- "Access Group" used for a wide range of primary level infection, "Watch Group" used against higher resistance bacteria, and "Reserve Group" only to be used when all alternatives fail.

AWaRe classification is a method to classify all antibiotics adopted by the World Health Organization in 2019.

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OUT OF KABUL A dozen Bangladeshis now in Qatar

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The 12 Bangladeshis and 160 Afghan students evacuated from Afghanistan to Qatar on Saturday have been under quarantine at a US base in Doha.

Their quarantine period will be determined by their health status following the RT-PCR test, a source familiar with the evacuation process told The Daily Star yesterday.

They will be brought to Bangladesh following the quarantine period, he said.

The Bangladeshis and the female Afghan students of the Asian University for Women in Chattogram were evacuated with the help of the US and the United Nations from Kabul.

Their flights were cancelled initially after the Taliban's seizing control of Afghanistan on August 15 as thousands of foreigners and Afghans rushed to flee the country in fear of Taliban rule.

Later, on August 26, SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



A man trying to keep his feet dry as he walks on a waterlogged street in the capital's Shyampur. The drainage system, while being inadequate, often remains clogged, causing the chemical-laden industrial discharge to flood the streets. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Blast rocks Kabul again

Rocket lands in a neighbourhood near airport; US strikes at IS militants

AGENCIES

A huge explosion was reported near Kabul airport yesterday after a rocket had hit a neighbourhood, hours after US President Joe Biden warned of another terror attack.

An Afghan police chief said the rocket struck a house in an area to the northern side of the airport amid US evacuation. Television footage showed black smoke was rising into the sky. However, no casualty was reported and no group immediately claimed the attack.

US President Joe Biden on Saturday warned of more attacks from the ISIS-K group. "The situation on the ground continues to be extremely dangerous, and the threat of terrorist attacks on the airport remains high," Biden said. "Our commanders informed me that an attack is highly likely in the next 24-36 hours."

Meanwhile, the US carried out a drone strike on Islamic State militants in Kabul yesterday, US officials said, as its forces at the capital's airport worked to complete a withdrawal that will end two decades of involvement in Afghanistan.

The officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Reuters the strike targeted suspected ISIS-K militants, a group that is an enemy of both the West and the Taliban and was responsible for a suicide bomb attack outside the airport gates on Thursday.

The attack by ISIS-K, a branch of Islamic State, killed at least 90 Afghans and 13 American troops as a huge evacuation operation was underway following the Taliban's seizure of Kabul on Aug. 15.

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