



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



REGD. No. DA 781 | Vol. XXXI No. 255 | ASHWIN 21, 1428 BS | **Your Right to Know** | SAFAR 28, 1443 HIJRI | 16 PAGES PRICE : Tk12.00

KUSHTIA MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL PROJECT

Delayed by 100 MONTHS

Cost also rises 148pc; PM orders punitive action against responsible officials

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has directed the authorities concerned to take punitive action against those responsible for unusual delays and irregularities in a project for building a medical college hospital in Kushtia.

She asked for action against officials responsible for the situation, even if they have retired.

The PM gave the directive when a proposal on the second revision of the project was placed for approval before the meeting of Executive Committee of the National Economic Council yesterday. The proposal was given the go-ahead.

Following the revision, the project cost has escalated to Tk 682.46 crore from the original Tk 275.43 crore. The deadline has been pushed to June 2023 from the original one of December 2014, a delay of more than a hundred months.

The project had witnessed 60 percent progress until December last year, show documents.

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Two Dhaka University students are ecstatic seeing each other at Bijoy Ekattor Hall yesterday as the dormitories are reopened after over one and a half years. The authorities allowed 4th year honours and master's students in since 8:00am after checking their identity cards and proof of at least one dose of Covid-19 vaccination. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

DU students reunite after 18 months

Dormitories open

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

Saimun Islam, a student of Arabic at Dhaka University, was in the line to enter his dormitory -- Shaheed Sergeant Zahurul Haq Hall -- yesterday morning. Saimun, of Noakhali, was eagerly waiting for this day. He had left his dorm around 18 months ago.

Like Saimun, some students travelled all night to reach their dorms as DU reopened its halls on a limited scale yesterday.

"I didn't even think that I would come here after such a long time. I left all my books in the hall as I thought I was going on a vacation. But two-three months later, I realised that I left here all of my plans and dreams," he told The Daily Star.

He said after a few more months, he realised that he needed the hall for his study. He wanted to come back to Dhaka, but had no financial support from his

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KUSHTIA MEDICAL COLLEGE AND HOSPITAL

Original cost Tk 275.43 cr	Original deadline Dec 2014	Project work started Feb 2014
Revised cost Tk 682.46 cr	New deadline June 2023	Completed till Dec 2020 60%

We'll open fire to stop arms, drug smuggling

FM on Myanmar border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen has said Bangladesh will open fire at the Myanmar border to stop arms and drugs smuggling and human trafficking.

"We had decided never to open fire at the border. But I had a discussion with the home minister yesterday [Monday] about the current situation at the border and decided that we will open fire in future. Only then crimes like human trafficking or drugs and arms smuggling will stop," he said.

The minister was talking to journalists after attending a programme at Sylhet

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Facebook outage hits entrepreneurs hard

Businesses 'lose 25pc orders'; experts encourage alternatives as back-up

MAHMUDUL HASAN and SHAHID BAPPY

Monday night's six-hour Facebook outage hit thousands of F-commerce entrepreneurs in the country as they neither could promote their products nor make deals during that period.

Unaware of Facebook and its other services -- WhatsApp and Instagram -- going down around 9:40pm on Monday, many F-commerce based businesses became worried as they could not refresh their feeds, respond to customer queries, and finalise deals.

Many missed business opportunities ahead of the Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of the Hindu community beginning next week. The outage cost the global economy about \$160 million per hour.

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Offshore links found in IPL teams

STAR REPORT

The Indian Premier League (IPL) franchises Kings XI Punjab (now named Punjab Kings) and Rajasthan Royals were originally founded with investment from offshore entities, reveals the Pandora Papers.

The Pandora Papers is a cache of 11.9 million files from companies hired by wealthy individuals to create offshore structures and trusts in tax havens, offering the most comprehensive look into the hidden operations of the global offshore economy that enables some of the world's richest people to hide their wealth and in

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Jatiya Party hits turbulence over GS appointment

RASHIDUL HASAN

There has been division and tension among the top leaders of Jatiya Party over the post of secretary general, which has been vacant since Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu passed away on Saturday.

Bablu was first appointed as secretary general in 2014 by the then party chairman HM Ershad, but was removed from the post in 2016.

Last year, current Chairman GM Quader made Bablu secretary general again after removing Moshir Rahman Ranga from the post.

JP insiders said many senior leaders are interested in the post.

But it was learnt from party sources that the top leadership wants to give it to someone relatively young, who has a good image inside and outside parliament.

Sources in JP said the party high-ups are considering Additional Secretary General (Rangpur Division) and JP lawmaker (Gaibandha-1) Shameem Haider Patwari for the post of secretary general.

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Vehicles parked on the road in front of a zonal office of Dhaka North City Corporation in the capital's Karwan Bazar. The corporation has installed iron poles on the busy road to create the parking space for its use. Often this chokes the busy road and disrupts traffic flow. The photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Judges ignoring SC directives, law

HC observes in full verdict

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Judges of lower courts are not following the relevant laws and Supreme Court directives while issuing orders on remand prayers, the High Court has observed.

It said the magistrates were not functioning normally and that it was contradictory to criminal justice and fair investigation.

Placing suspects on remand when not needed wastes judicial time and money, it said, adding that the courts should be more careful.

The court made these observations while criticising magistrates who had placed model Mariam Akhter Mou on remand for nine days in three phases in a narcotics case.

"Taking into account the gravity and nature of the offence, we do not think that there was any need for remand in three phases for nine days. The magistrates are not functioning [as they usually do]. They are not following the direction or guidelines of our apex court and the prevailing law on remand. This is contrary to criminal justice and fair investigation.

"Pursuant to that, unnecessary remand is wasting tax payers' money as well as judicial time," the HC bench of Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam and Justice KM Zahid Sarwar Kajol said in the full text of the order that on September 22 granted conditional bail for one year to Mou.

In order to reduce crime from society, courts should be extra careful and consider that the woman gets a chance to shun the path of crime, rather than becoming a habitual criminal by interacting with hardened criminals in jail, read the full text released recently.

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