

RUSSIAN OFFENSIVE LIKELY IN JAN

Says Ukraine as tensions soar over alleged Russian troop build-up near Kiev's borders
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"It is minimum demand. It is not a matter of kindness, magnanimity or humanity as it is her civic right."
BNP LEADER MIRZA FAKHRUL ISLAM ABRAHIM KHAN ON SENDING KHALEDA ZIA ABROAD FOR TREATMENT



"Things get easier when Shakib bhai plays. With him returning, we're thinking of employing four bowlers and seven batters."
BANGLADESH CAPTAIN MOMINUL HAQUE AHEAD OF SECOND TEST AGAINST PAKISTAN



"We need to welcome and integrate one another and to walk together as brothers and sisters, all of us."
POPE FRANCIS URGES EUROPEAN UNITY AMID MIGRANT INFLUX

PLAN TO OVERHAUL LANDSCAPE

Drastic changes designed for DU



15-YEAR MASTER PLAN

- 97 high-rises to be constructed; 599 old buildings to be dismantled
- 20-storey administrative building to be the tallest among new structures
- Modern library, medical centre, improved drainage system, roads for cycling included
- Implementation in three phases -- 28 buildings in the first

ASIFUR RAHMAN and SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

Plans are afoot to change the landscape of Dhaka University.

Known for its aesthetic beauty with iconic structures, plenty of trees and abundance of green spaces, the century-old educational institution will undergo a massive structural overhauling to facilitate the growing number of students, teachers and staffers.

The DU authorities would construct 97 high-rise buildings and dismantle 599 old structures under a 15-year master plan that they submitted to the Prime Minister's Office recently for approval.

They also sought Tk 9,000 crore to

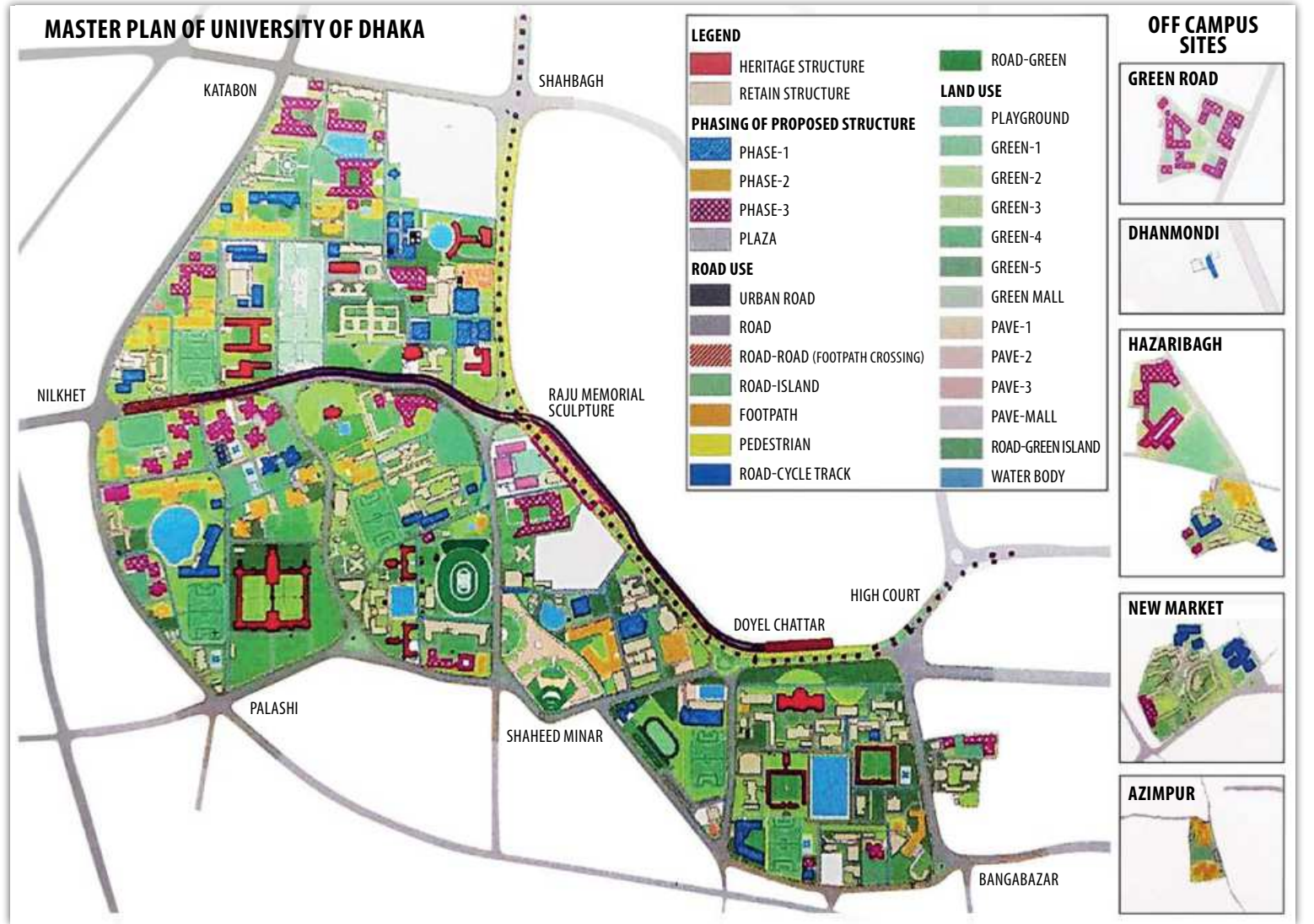
implement the master plan.

If approved, the university would see new academic buildings, dormitories, teachers' quarters, modern library and medical centre, among others. The plan also contained new roads for cycling and walkway, increased greenery and waterbody.

Of all the new structures, a 20-storey administrative building will be the tallest one.

While the authorities believe the structural development, aimed at expanding the 304-acre campus vertically, would not reduce the existing green space, teachers, students and urban planners are apprehensive about the institution losing its history and tradition

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A photographed image of the plan that has been passed in the DU Syndicate recently and submitted to the Prime Minister's Office for approval.

'We need to be watchful'

Prof Wahiduddin warns about post-LCD challenges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is now cited by many as a country producing billionaires as its high economic growth is increasingly becoming unequal, which



undermines the vision of equitable growth to become a rich nation in the next 20 years, Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud has told a development conference.

China, another example of high economic growth, has seen one of the highest rises in income inequality. In contrast, Japan, which had about the same per capita income as Argentina around 1900, is now the world's third biggest economy and its growth has been remarkably equitable, he said.

The noted economist was presenting a keynote paper at the concluding session of the BIDS Annual Conference on Development to mark 50 years of Bangladesh's independence.

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Maldives seeks loan from Bangladesh

Govt actively considering the request: BB governor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In another show of the growing strength of Bangladesh's economy, the government might give loans to the Maldives after the Island nation sought funds.

If the government agrees to the request, it will mark the second time that Bangladesh has lent money to another country.

Dhaka in August lent \$250 million to Colombo, Sri Lanka in the form of currency swap to help prop up the latter's fast-depleting foreign reserves and ease pressure on its exchange rate.

The Maldives' economy is largely dependent on tourism and its economy contracted by 32 percent last year due to the pandemic.

The low level of usable reserves and high indebtedness pose significant risks to macroeconomic stability of the Maldives, according to the World Bank.

"The Maldives requested us for a loan for a longer term. We are actively considering it," Bangladesh Bank Governor Fazle Kabir told a roundtable yesterday during the

final session of the three-day Annual BIDS Conference on Development: Celebrating 50 Years of Bangladesh.

The event organised by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies was held at the capital's Lakeshore Hotel.

Speaking about inflation, he said, "With the recent rise in prices of commodities globally amid economic recovery and demand-side pressure, the country may face some challenges in taming general inflation in the coming months."

"However, the bumper production of rice in the last harvesting season and the government's serious drive for boosting the food stock from domestic and international sources may provide a sense of relief."

Abdur Rouf Talukder, senior secretary of the Finance Division, said subsidies and inflation would be the major challenges in the current fiscal year.

Subsidies in these three areas are 1 percent of the GDP for this fiscal year. But the prices of oil, gas and fertiliser have gone up in the international market, he said.

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Bangladesh makes fresh travel rules

Quarantine must for passengers from 7 African countries

STAR REPORT

Incoming passengers from South Africa and six other countries have to stay in 14-day mandatory institutional quarantine at their own expenses in designated hotels from today, said Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh.

The six other countries are: Botswana, Eswatini, Ghana, Lesotho, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. The new potentially more contagious Omicron variant of coronavirus is dominant in those countries, said a CAAB notice issued on Thursday night.

Additionally, while travelling to Bangladesh from anywhere in the world, passengers must

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Brace for Omicron

Warns WHO, says vaccination, not travel curbs, key to battling the Covid variant

AGENCIES

The World Health Organisation (WHO) yesterday urged countries to boost healthcare capacity and vaccinate their people to fight a surge in Covid-19 cases driven by the Omicron variant, saying that travel curbs could buy time but alone were not the answer.

Despite shutting its borders to travel from high-risk southern African countries, Australia became the latest country to report community transmission of the new variant, a day after it was found in five US states.

Omicron has gained a foothold in Asia, Africa, the Americas, the Middle East and Europe and has reached seven of the nine provinces of South Africa, where it was first identified. Many governments have tightened travel rules to keep the variant out.

"Border controls can buy time but every country and every community must prepare for new surges in cases," Takeshi Kasai, the WHO's western Pacific director, told a media briefing.

"People should not only rely on border measures. What is most important is to prepare for these variants with potential high transmissibility. So far the information available suggests we don't have to change our approach."

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Schoolgirl killed, road safety demo continues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students' protest for safer roads continues in the wake of the recent deaths of two of their peers in road crashes, with more demonstrations planned for today.

Even amid such protests, a school student died yesterday in Tangail when she was run over by a bricks-laden truck after she fell from a battery-run auto-rickshaw.

Thirteen-year-old Hafiza Akhter, a seventh-grader at Gopalidighi KP High School, sustained fatal injuries to her head and died on the spot, said Azizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Kalihati Police Station.

Quoting witnesses, the OC said the battery-run auto-rickshaw skidded off the road while taking a turn and Hafiza fell on the road near the school around 2:00pm.

He said locals stopped the truck, but the driver managed to flee.

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A student chants slogans during a demonstration in the capital's Rampura bridge area yesterday demanding the government meet their 11-point demand, ensuring road safety. Students, who took to the streets a few days ago, said they will continue their protests until their demands are met.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

CTG-COX'S BAZAR RAIL LINK Meeting target major challenge

12km out of 100.8km track installed; 64 percent progress in project till October



TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY, back from Cox's Bazar

While the construction work of a rail line from Chattogram to Cox's Bazar is going on at a speed to bring the tourist town under railway network, Bangladesh Railway has also started the preparatory work for operating railway services on the new route.

Around 12km rail track, out of 100.8km, has already been installed and the project saw 64 percent overall progress till October this year to meet the revised target of opening the line to the public by December next year.

Project insiders said meeting the target would be very challenging and if not completed by December next year, they hope it would be done by June 2023.

This correspondent recently saw the workers were busy setting up rail track and constructing stations in

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