



"We appreciate that India is taking this situation in the entirety of facts and not just in a one-sided way."  
Russian FM Sergei Lavrov on Ukraine crisis

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44 RHD PROJECTS

## Only three on the track

Set to be completed within original deadline this fiscal year

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

While the Roads and Highways Department says 44 of its ongoing projects will be wrapped up this fiscal year, documents reveal only three would end within their original deadlines.

Most of the remaining 41 projects missed their original deadlines more than two years ago. Some projects are delayed by three to four years.

Twenty-three of the 44 projects have gone through cost revisions, show the documents.

Time extension and cost escalations are nothing new for RHD projects and it exposes weaknesses in implementing such work.

An evaluation report of the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division on 49 projects, completed in fiscal 2016-17, shows 41 of them saw both time extension and cost escalation.

Taking up projects without proper feasibility studies and estimation of costs, long delays in tender process,



SLOW-GOING PROJECTS

- 185 RHD projects under implementation
- 44 set to complete by current fiscal year
- 41 of them to miss original deadline for completion
- Most of the projects delayed by 2-4 years
- More than half of the projects saw cost revision

and dividing project work in "small packages" to benefit influential but non-professional contractors are among the key reasons for delays, the report pointed out.

Delays in land acquisition, utility shifting and frequent changes of project directors are also to blame for the RHD's poor show, the report also said.

The RHD is currently implementing 185 projects, including 22 foreign-aided ones. The government allocated Tk 19,656 crore under the Annual Development Programme (ADP) this fiscal year for completing the work.

The RHD has sent a list to the planning ministry, naming 44 projects which they said would be complete this fiscal year.

Recently, the ministry has uploaded on its website lists of all government projects scheduled to be completed this fiscal year. The RHD projects were mentioned there.

An analysis of relevant documents reveals 39 of the 44 projects were supposed to be complete by different dates

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Seven-month-old Raisa Moni cannot be away from the warmth and love of her mother, Sumaiya Akhter, be it at home or outside. The mother, aged 25, undergoes treatment for diarrhoea at the capital's icddr,b while her baby eats a biscuit sitting beside her. Cases of diarrhoea have spiked in the city in the last couple of weeks. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

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## More woes for low-income people

Prices of essentials, fish, meat soar ahead of Ramadan

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

The rising prices of essentials ahead of Ramadan has dealt a fresh blow to the people with limited income.

Over the last couple of days, the prices of each kg of green chilli, cucumber, lemon, brinjal, and certain fruits, went up by Tk 20-50 while each kg of fish and meat shot up by Tk 50-100.

At several kitchen markets in the capital, these correspondents saw that the number of shoppers at grocery stores significantly increased as the month of Ramadan is set to begin.

Traders said the prices were rising mainly because of the increased demands.

"They do the same thing every year. But there is no one to see this," said Monowara Begum, who bought cucumber, beef and green chilli at a kitchen market in Kazipara.

"I bought beef after a long time. The family members want to begin Ramadan with good food. I don't want to disappoint them," said the mother of two, adding that she might have to cut consumption by the end of the month to cope with the rising prices.

The drop in prices of edible oils, onions and sugar could not bring any respite to the people as other essentials became pricier.

At Karwanbazar, retired official Tokabuddin said, "It has become difficult for middle-

income people like me to run a family."

Babul, owner of Shubho Sabji Bitan, yesterday said a kg of brinjal was sold for Tk 80-90, up from Tk 40-50 just two days ago.

Each kg of cucumber now costs Tk 20-30 more than the previous price. Green chilli and lemon also became costlier.

Babul said the prices are likely to come down in less than a week.

Sheikh Jahangir Hossain, who sells fruits, said the price of bananas shot up by Tk 20-50 per dozen.

There is an ample supply of watermelon, he said, but each kg now costs Tk 10 more.

Similarly, fish seller Shukkur

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## She wanted safe road, she now becomes victim

NSU student killed in crash; 7 more die in different dists

STAR REPORT

She was among those who demanded safe roads during the student movement in 2018. Four years later, she herself has become a victim of road accident.

Maisha Momotaz Meem, 22, a North South University student, was killed on the Kuril Flyover in the capital yesterday morning when she was going to the NSU campus on her scooter to attend a programme, Munshi Sabbir, officer-in-charge of Khilkhet Police Station, told The Daily Star.

"CCTV footage of the area shows that a covered van was closely passing by Meem's scooter on the flyover. But it is not clear in the footage whether the vehicle hit her scooter," he said, adding that she was found dead around

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## Slain Rohingya leader's family relocated to Canada

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Eleven family members of Mohibullah, a Rohingya leader who was killed in Cox's Bazar's Kutupalong camp six months ago, have been relocated to Canada.

"Mohibullah's family members had been in fear since the Rohingya leader was killed. It is good that Canada took them," Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen told reporters at his residence in the capital yesterday.

They were flown to Canada Thursday night under the Canadian government's refugee assistance programme, a former close aide of Mohibullah told The Daily Star.

"We would like the developed countries taking all the Rohingyas. They have huge land, but Bangladesh is a small country with a high

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Protesters set a bus on fire during a demonstration outside the Sri Lankan president's home to call for his resignation in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on late Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

## ANGER OVER ECONOMIC CRISIS

## Sri Lanka steps up security after violent protests

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka was under heavy security yesterday after hundreds of protesters tried to storm the president's home in a night of violence and anger at the unprecedented economic crisis.

The South Asian nation is grappling with severe shortages of essentials, sharp price rises and crippling power cuts in its most painful downturn since independence in 1948. Many fear it will default on its foreign debts.

Thursday night's unrest outside Gotabaya Rajapaksa's private home in the capital saw hundreds of men and women, rallied by unidentified social media activists, demand he step down.

"Gota, go home," shouted a young woman as she marched to the president's home before clashes erupted with heavily armed police commandos and troops.

"We want our country back," shouted another woman, while others chanted "lunatic, lunatic, go home."

As police fired tear gas and water cannon, the crowd turned violent, setting ablaze two military buses, a police jeep, two patrol motorcycles and a three-wheeler. They also threw bricks at officers.

At least two protesters were wounded in police firing but it was not clear whether officers used live ammunition or rubber bullets. Four people were injured

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