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The construction work of a bridge on Bangabandhu Bridge Link Road in Sirajganj may cause a serious traffic congestion on both sides of the bridge during Eid holidays. The authorities, however, assured that the work would be finished before the home rush begins.

PHOTO: STAR

## Cricket fraternity shaken by losses



Samiur Rahman



Mosharraf Hossain

### SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh cricket community was shocked by the demise of two former national cricketers yesterday. In the morning, news broke about Samiur Rahman Sami's before Mosharraf Hossain Rubel's passing in the afternoon.

Both breathed their last after long battles with illnesses.

Left-arm seamer Sami, who had been ill for the past year and a half after being diagnosed with a brain tumour, was recently admitted to a city hospital after his condition deteriorated. He breathed his last at the age of 66.

On the other hand, left-arm spinner Rubel had been battling cancer after being diagnosed with a brain tumour in March 2019. He passed away at a city hospital at the age of 40.

Sami, who was noted for his ability to swing the ball, was a member of Bangladesh's first ODI team that played Pakistan in an Asia Cup fixture in 1986 in Moratuwa, Sri Lanka. He would appear in one more ODI for Bangladesh.

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### CONGESTION AROUND BANGABANDHU BRIDGE

## Ordeal lies in wait for those northbound

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU and MIRZA SHAKIL

Eid holidaymakers heading for northern districts might get caught in gridlocks on both sides of the Bangabandhu bridge due to the expansion work on a 25km stretch of the Elenga-Rangpur highway.

The government is upgrading the 190km highway to dual carriageway. As part of the development work, road expansion works is underway on the stretch between Bangabandhu bridge's west end and Hatikumul intersection in Sirajganj.

Also, the construction work of a bridge is going on in Sirajganj's Nolkha area.

Slow movement of vehicles is already causing tailbacks on both sides of the Bangabandhu bridge. The situation could worsen further if more vehicles hit the highway ahead of the Eid holidays by the end of next week, which is almost certain to happen, said transport operators.

The Bangabandhu bridge on

the Jamuna is considered the gateway to 16 northern districts. Besides, vehicles heading for six southern districts also use this bridge.

On an average day, some 18,000 to 20,000 vehicles use the bridge. The number goes up to 50,000 to 60,000 during Eid rush, according to highway police.

The bridge connects Tangail

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and Sirajganj districts. Its eastern part is at Ibrahimabad of Tangail's Bhuapur upazila and the western end in Sayedabad area of Sirajganj Sadar upazila.

Passengers and transport operators said they are already experiencing gridlocks due to the construction work. The situation might worsen during the Eid holidays.

Bus driver Masud Rana said, "We used to travel the 25km distance in around an hour. But the journey now takes us around five to six hours."

Md Alauddin, another bus driver, said they cannot even imagine how terrible the traffic situation would be during the Eid rush.

According to passengers and transport operators, when a gridlock is created on the west end of the Bangabandhu bridge, it impacts traffic at the eastern end.

They said if vehicles cannot move on the west zone highway, the authorities stop vehicles from getting on the bridge at the eastern end. As a result, long tailbacks are created on the highway in Tangail.

Amid such a situation, the highway police are taking special measures to control traffic during the holidays.

"We have identified 26 spots on the 25km stretch of the highway. Additional policemen will be deployed there to ensure

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### FLASH FLOOD IN HAORS

## Harvesting of half-ripe paddy continues

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Farmers in haor areas continue to harvest half-ripe Boro fearing more flash floods triggered by torrential rain in the north-eastern districts of Bangladesh and in India's Meghalaya.

Rivers in the areas are flowing close to or over the danger level and crop protection levees are on the verge of collapse. The Department of Agricultural Extension also urged farmers to harvest the paddy fast.

Swapan Kumar Barman, a farmer of Khorchar Haor in Sunamganj's Bishwambarpur upazila, said, "We can't wait any longer. As rivers are swelling and the dykes are vulnerable, it is high time to harvest."

According to the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) of Bangladesh Water Development Board, the Baulai river in Netrakona was flowing 27cm above the danger level and the Sarigowain river in Sylhet 5cm above the danger mark at 9:00am yesterday.

FFWC added that water of rivers would slowly rise in Netrakona. The level would stay close to the danger level in haor areas of Netrakona, Sunamganj, and Sylhet.

Farmers of Netrakona harvested paddy of 69 percent haor farmland until yesterday, and no new areas were inundated, said FM Mobarak Ali, deputy director of the DAE in the district.

In the district, Boro has been cultivated on

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## No big surprise in new Pak cabinet

### Bilawal tipped to become foreign minister

#### AGENCIES

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif sprang no big surprises in naming his new cabinet yesterday, doling out key portfolios to officials from the two parties that combined to oust Imran Khan after weeks of political crisis.

The cabinet is drawn mostly from Shehbaz's Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), two usually-feuding dynastic groups who combined to force a no-confidence vote that ousted Khan on April 10.

How long the government lasts remains to be seen, however, as most of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawmakers have quit parliament and the former cricketer turned politician has taken his fight to the streets to press for an early election -- which must be held by October next year.

"It will be an uphill task for the prime minister to pull them together in one direction because some parties have local and regional interests, and some have national interests," analyst Hasan Askari told AFP.

"If they handle economic issues, other problems will settle down -- but if the situation worsens, everyone will blame the PML-N, which is in majority."

There were just five women in Sharif's 37-member cabinet.

Shehbaz, brother of three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif, did not name a foreign minister but that role is expected to go to the scion of another

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## METRO RAIL

## Emergency drill conducted for passengers' safety

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Metrail authorities have installed special buttons in each carriage of the trains to better deal with emergencies and ensure passengers' safety.

Once the train operator receives an emergency call from the buttons, the message will be transmitted by the operator to the Operation Control Centre (OCC) at the Diabari depot.

The OCC will then command each operator to stop the train at the next station, and inform the station controller, police and fire service.

In the meantime, the Disaster Management Team (DMT) at Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL), which will operate the metro rail, will inform the organisations concerned.

Once the train is stopped, the passengers will be evacuated, and the fire service and police officials will take the next course of action.

All these works are expected to be completed within minutes, according to the authorities, who conducted an emergency response drill at the Metro Rail Exhibition

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The authorities conducting a safety drill at the Metro Rail Exhibition and Information Centre in the capital's Diabari yesterday. A special button has been installed in each carriage of the trains to avert arson-related emergencies and ensure the safety of passengers.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HUQ

## Electric chopsticks to enhance taste

### REUTERS, Tokyo

Japanese researchers have developed computerised chopsticks that enhance salty tastes, potentially helping those who need to reduce sodium in their diets.

Co-developed by Meiji University professor Homei Miyashita and beverage maker Kirin Holdings Co. 2503.T, the chopsticks enhance tastes using electrical stimulation and a mini-computer worn on a wristband.

The device uses a weak electrical current to transmit sodium ions from food, through the chopsticks, to the mouth where they create a sense of saltiness, said Miyashita.

"As a result, the salty taste enhances 1.5 times," he said.

Miyashita and his lab have explored various ways that technology can interact with and stimulate human sensory experiences. He's also developed a lickable TV screen that can imitate

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