

DHAKA-ASHULIA EXPRESSWAY

Project cost to rise by Tk 651cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cost for Dhaka-Ashulia Elevated Expressway project is going to rise Tk 651.72 crore, as the Chinese government has reduced its financing for the mega project.

The project, taken in 2017, is yet to formally start, and now, the deadline has been extended for four more years, to June 2026.

The government yesterday revised the budget and duration of the project for the first time.

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Enec) in its meeting approved the first revision.

The original cost of the project was Tk 16,901.32 crore, and now, it is Tk 17,553.04 crore.

The government approved the project in October 2017 and the deadline for completion of

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With the dividers being broken down, and no one to monitor traffic movement, vehicles were seen taking advantage of the situation, by taking U-turns towards Tongi and Airport Road. As this road at Uttara's Azampur area usually remains busy with large vehicles, this situation is creating gridlocks and poses risks for accidents. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

ECONOMIC DIALOGUE IN US

Dhaka to seek reinstatement of trade benefit

PORIMOL PALMA

The US will push for labour reforms and cotton exports to Bangladesh, while Dhaka plans to seek reinstatement of the GSP trade benefit during the High-Level Economic Partnership Dialogue in Washington DC, to be held today.

The dialogue will also discuss issues of the US' newly announced Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity, which has been joined by 12 countries. Washington expects Bangladesh to join as well.

For the dialogue, Prime Minister's Adviser for Private Industry and Investment Salman F Rahman is leading the Bangladesh delegation, comprised of officials of ministries of finance, commerce, and foreign affairs, and Bangladesh Investment Development Authority.

"The dialogue will be focusing on trade and economy. And obviously, we will seek reinstatement of GSP. We will also seek investment from the US for enhancing our coastal embankment work and technology for renewable energy," a foreign ministry official told The Daily Star yesterday.

The US is now the single largest export destination of Bangladeshi products, mainly ready-made garments, worth \$8 billion a year. The country, however, suspended the generalised preferential system (GSP), a trade benefit following the Rana Plaza collapse in 2013.

Since then, Bangladesh has repeatedly requested for the reinstatement of GSP, but to no avail.

At a meeting in early April in Washington, Foreign Minister Abdul Momen told USAID Administrator Samantha Power that Bangladesh was in need of funding for infrastructure development.

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The kids are not alright

Long school closures during pandemic badly impacted adolescents, finds study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Long-term school closures during the pandemic have badly impacted the lives of adolescents in a multitude of ways, beyond disruption in education, finds a recent study.

The government needs to integrate the issue into its Covid-19 recovery plans to mitigate this impact, said speakers yesterday at the dissemination programme of the study titled "Adolescent Girls' Vulnerabilities and Transitions in the Context of Covid-19", conducted by Brac Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) and supported by British High Commission and German embassy in Dhaka.

In his opening remarks, Dr Imran Matin, executive director of BIGD, said, "Through our study and discussion, tackling economic distress, ensuring quality education and setting schools as a socialisation platform, emerged strongly as a policy priority."

The study found that adolescents reportedly had to grapple with reduced educational aspirations, poorer psychosocial well-being, increased restrictions and control over social relations, and pressures to start working for

a living.

Decisions made by parents and adolescents during the pandemic will influence their future life trajectories by determining their educational achievements, reproductive health and livelihood choices, said the study.

A total of 2,758 households were surveyed, and 3,139 adolescents

significantly affect drop-out rates, at least 35 percent of the dropouts mentioned that the pandemic led to an unwillingness to study further. Another 16 percent said they could no longer afford education.

Some 26 percent of adolescents fell victims to different types of violence during the pandemic.

AT A GLANCE

- 35pc of school dropouts pointed to Covid-19 as reason
- 16pc couldn't afford education anymore
- 26pc of adolescents fell victim to violence
- 50pc of parents gave pandemic as reason for daughters' early marriage

in 26 upazilas in Gaibandha, Narail, and Cumilla districts were interviewed for the study, conducted from September to November last year.

According to the research, 35 percent of adolescents studied for three to five hours before the pandemic. The percentage went down to 14 percent during the pandemic.

While Covid-19 did not

Boys were more prone to physical violence, while girls were more prone to sexual violence.

Although the study found little variation in the rate of early marriage before and after the pandemic, nearly 50 percent of the parents said that their decision to marry off their daughters was moderately or highly influenced by the pandemic, as they felt they

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DHAKA-MAWA-BHANGA EXPRESSWAY

No mention of its official name yet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga Expressway was named after Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on February 19, 2019, by road transport and bridges ministry.

A gazette was issued by the ministry's road transport and highways division on March 19 of the same year, naming it "Jatir Pita Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Mohasarak", a year before opening the country's first-ever expressway.

However, the authorities, including the expressway's custodian Roads and Highways Department (RHD), have not been using the name in official documents of the expressway.

The expressway is more often mentioned as Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga Expressway in government documents.

The issue was raised at a monthly coordination

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Tk 837.92cr for import, 33.80cr for drilling

Cabinet committee approves plan for getting LNG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase yesterday approved to import one cargo of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the spot market, with a cost of Tk 837.92 crore, while Tk 33.80 crore was approved for purchasing drilling materials for a local well.

The approval came in a virtual meeting presided by Finance Minister Mustafa Kamal.

Confirming the matter, Md Zillur Rahman Chowdhury, additional secretary of Cabinet Division, told The Daily Star that they got the lowest rate in recent times for buying LNG from the spot market by Gunvor Singapore Pte

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Memorial event for Gaffar Chy held

STAR REPORT

A memorial meeting for veteran writer, columnist and journalist Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury was arranged at the main auditorium of Bishwashahitta Kendro on Tuesday.

Gaffar's son Anupam Chowdhury recalled his late father's memories and expressed gratitude to the people of Bangladesh for their immense love and respect towards him, said a press release.

Gaffar's daughter-in-law Claire Booker, a renowned English poet, recited poetry in the programme and expressed her thoughts.

Mohammad Nurul Huda, director general of Bangla Academy, expressed his deep sorrow and talked about the journalist's courageous efforts to reveal the truth.

Prominent poet Jahidul Huq took part in the discussion by paying homage to the veteran.

Noted reciter Progga Laboni recited Gaffar's poetry in the programme.

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PRAYER
TIMING
JUNE 2



	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-45	8-15
Jamaat	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-50	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Taste of Life

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