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PADMA BRIDGE It will boost Indo-Bangla connectivity Says Indian envoy

UNB, Dhaka

Vikram Kumar Doraiswami, Indian high commissioner to Bangladesh, said the Padma Bridge will contribute to greater connectivity between Bangladesh and India and in the sub-region supporting the BBIN initiative.

"From that perspective, as a country that has long valued the opportunity to increase connectivity across the sub-region, we in India will be delighted," he told journalists at the high commission on Tuesday.

He attributed the achievement to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's "continuous and consistently courageous decision".

The high commissioner said Hasina was proven correct in her decision to go ahead with this

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Buildings remain half destroyed after City Corporation authorities carried out eviction drives against illegal establishments -- including residential buildings, shops and factories -- at the Kathalbagan Box culvert road a month and half ago. People have begun living in the partly-demolished structures, which might result in tragic accidents. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

BNP leader bombed, hacked to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Benapole

A ward-level BNP leader was attacked with explosives and then hacked to death by miscreants in Jashore's Benapole on Tuesday night.

The deceased, Ashanuzzaman Bablu, president of Mohisakura Ward-7 BNP unit, was also a union parishad member of Baganchara in Sharsa upazila.

Police and witnesses said Bablu was at a tea stall with acquaintances near his house in Balunda Bazar. Around 11:30pm, three people appeared on motorcycles and threw explosives targeting him.

While people fled the area, they hacked Bablu to confirm his death.

Kamal Hossain, officer-in-charge of Benapole Port Police, said they still do not know who the killers were.

"The matter is being investigated. The body was sent to the Jashore General Hospital for autopsy yesterday.

DRAFT EDUCATION ACT

Blitz against notebooks, private tuition

Draft to be sent to cabinet next week

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Bangladesh's first education act, which will be sent to the cabinet division next week for approval, orders a ban on printing, publishing and marketing notebooks and guidebooks -- a menace to the country's education system.

While students are given free textbooks by the government, they need to spend a sizeable amount to purchase a set of notebooks.

If found printing, publishing and marketing notebooks and guidebooks, the penalty is three years' imprisonment or a fine of Tk 5 lakh or both, as per the latest iteration of the draft, which was locked by the education ministry yesterday.

The draft, which is in line with the Education Policy of 2010, allows the publishing of supplementary books and education aid books but only after approval from the authorities concerned.

However, if a teacher is found pushing the supplementary books and education aid books on the students, it will be considered misconduct and disciplinary actions will be taken.

The draft forbids teachers from giving private

tuition to students of their institution.

Another salient feature of the draft act, which has been in the works since 2011, is its ban on corporal punishment for schoolchildren and mental torture by teachers.

The draft will be sent to the cabinet division next week, said Abu Bakr Siddique, secretary of the secondary and higher education division, after the meeting yesterday where it was finalised.

This would be the fourth time that the ministry is forwarding the draft law to the cabinet division.

It was last sent in October last year and the cabinet division sent it back with observations and instructions for revisions, as in 2016 and 2017.

The back-and-forth is taking place over the provisions concerning guidebooks, notebooks and coaching centres, according to education ministry officials informed on the matter.

For instance, the version forwarded in December 2016 was met with a chorus of disapproval at the cabinet division as the ministry gave legitimacy to coaching and private tuition in the name of "shadow education".

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MATARBARI PLANT Govt won't implement phase-2

Japan cancels
funding

ASIFUR RAHMAN

The government has decided not to implement the second phase of the Matarbari coal-fired power plant, a cabinet member confirmed yesterday hours after Japan announced the cancellation of funding for the project.

At a press conference in Japan, Hikariko Ono, foreign press secretary of Japan, said support for coal-fired power projects by Official Development Assistance (ODA) for Bangladesh and Indonesia will be suspended.

The announcement came following Japan's commitment at the G7 summit in June last year. It agreed to end new support for coal-fired power generation facilities that did not take measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the end of 2021, according to Jiji

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Polls will be fair, I hope all parties join

Hasina tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday told parliament that she hoped the next national election would be held in a free and fair manner with spontaneous participation of all political parties.

She added that her government has taken 11 "significant" measures to make the polls more acceptable and inclusive.

The measures include ensuring environment to carry out party activities smoothly and for participation of all political parties in the election.

The PM was replying to a query from Syed Abu Hossain, opposition Jatiya Party lawmaker from Dhaka-4 (Demra Shyampur).

In her written answer, Hasina, also leader of the House, said as per article 118 (4) of the constitution, the Election Commission is an independent and constitutional body.

"The chief election commissioner and other commissioners carry out their respective work independently in line with the constitution and the law. The government assists the Election Commission as per its requirement."

The EC will remain independent in carrying out its activities and it will remain only under the jurisdiction of the constitution and the law. It is the duty of the government and the executive

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Thanks, but no thanks

BNP turns down invite to
Padma Bridge inauguration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP will not join the inauguration of the Padma Bridge.

Party's Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir said this in response to a query during a press conference yesterday afternoon.

He said the BNP leaders and activists will not go to any event organised by those who killed people and want to kill eminent persons by pushing them into the river.

Earlier in the day, the government invited a group of senior party leaders to join the opening ceremony of the Padma Bridge on June 25.

Dulal Chandra Sutradhar, a deputy secretary of the Bridges Division, went to the BNP's Nayapaltan central office around 11:00am and handed over the invitation cards to the party's senior joint secretary general, Ruhul Kabir Rizvi.

Apart from Mirza Fakhru, BNP standing committee members Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Mirza Abbas, Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Abdul Moin Khan, Nazrul Islam Khan and Vice-Chairman Hafiz Uddin Ahmed were invited to the programme.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May 18, during a speech marking her homecoming from exile, said Khaleda Zia should be pushed into the river from the Padma Bridge, a comment the BNP termed tantamount to death threat.

Fakhru claimed the prime minister lied today (yesterday) when she said the BNP-Jamaat

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Govt extends shopping hours ahead of Eid

Malls, stores to stay open till 10pm

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shopping malls and shops across the country can stay open till 10:00pm from July 1 to 10 ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, the government decided yesterday.

Shop owners will have to pay their staff allowance for the two extra hours, said a Ministry of Labour and Employment gazette notification issued yesterday.

In a meeting on Sunday, business leaders requested the government to allow them to keep shops open till 10:00pm on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha.

The Eid is likely to fall on July 9.

The government had earlier ordered shops to close by 8:00pm. From June 20, shops and malls across the country had been following the directive.

The PMO in a letter on June 17 announced the order on PM Sheikh Hasina's instructions, stating that the Bangladesh Labour Act already stipulates the closure of shops at 8:00pm.

The Prime Minister gave the directives to save power and energy amid rising energy prices worldwide following the Russia-Ukraine war.



Vehicles dumped near the Shahbagh Police Control room after police confiscated them at different times. Most of the time, they cannot complete the lengthy legal process and the vehicles are left unattended until they are completely damaged. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Archaeologists discover ancient Roman temple



REUTERS, Amsterdam

Archaeologists have discovered an ancient Roman sanctuary with a relatively intact Roman temple in the Dutch central-east Gelderland province, the country's cultural heritage agency said, describing the find as "exceptional".

Volunteers made the first discovery in 2021 in a city near Unesco World Heritage Roman Limes - which represents the border line of the Roman empire at its greatest extent in the 2nd century AD - and alerted the agency.

"There used to be several temples here. We have found

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