



# A LEAP for Asian connectivity

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

This is a dream bridge which will not only establish the long-awaited direct road and rail communications between the capital and south-western parts of Bangladesh but also contribute to greater connectivity and trade among Asian countries.

The Padma Bridge will have significant economic impacts by cutting the travel time as well as freight costs, and thus bring prosperity for 21 districts in particular and the nation in general.

It will also work as a key component of the Asian Highway-1, boosting economic growth of Asia and improving the country's standing in the continent.

In August 2009, Bangladesh joined the network conceived by the United Nations with a view to setting up regional connectivity among Asian countries via a highway system of over 145,000km roads passing through 32 countries.

Bangladesh is connected with three Asian Highway routes named AH-1, AH-2 and AH-41 with a total length of 1,771km.

The AH-1, connecting Assam with West Bengal of India via Sylhet-Dhaka-Narail-Jashore, had two missing

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**NEW ERA IN RAIL, ROAD LINKS**

**ASIAN HIGHWAY 1 ROUTE**  
Guwahati (India)-Tamabil-Sylhet-Shaistaganj-Narsingdi-Kanchpur-Dhaka-Mawa-Charjanajat-Bhanga-Bhatiapara-Kalna Ferry Ghat-Narail-Jashore-Benapole-Petrapole (India)

**SIGNIFICANCE**

- It will be the shortest route between two parts of India via Bangladesh
- The network comprises over 145,000km of roads passing through 32 countries

**TRANS-ASIAN RAILWAY 4 ROUTE**  
Petrapole (India)-Benapole-Jashore-Narail-Bhanga-Mawa-Narayanganj-Dhaka-Tongi-Akhaura-Ctg-Dohazari-Gundum-Myanmar

**SIGNIFICANCE**

- It will reduce the travel distance from Dhaka to Kolkata by 63km
- The network comprises approximately 125,500km of railway lines serving 28 member countries

## Padma Bridge handed over to the govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The long cherished Padma Bridge is now ready to be inaugurated as the contractor formally handed over the bridge to the project authorities.

China Major Bridge Engineering Co Ltd, the contractor for the main bridge, handed over the bridge to Project Director Shafiqul Islam on Wednesday.

"We formally received the bridge for official or commercial use," Shafiqul Islam told The Daily Star yesterday. "The bridge is now fully ready for opening."

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the country's longest bridge tomorrow morning.

The 6.5-kilometre road and rail bridge, directly connecting the capital with the southwestern districts, will be opened to public at 6:00am the following day.

As per the programme schedule, Hasina will take part in a civil rally at the Mawa end of the bridge at 10:00am tomorrow.

At the programme, Road Transport and

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## Inaccessible, in distress

Both admin and private efforts far from enough for over a third of Sylhet unions

ZYMA ISLAM, MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN, DWOHA CHOWDHURY and MINTU DESHWARA

Thousands of people in 93 unions – one-third of the total 336 in Sylhet division – suffer immensely as no humanitarian aid could reach them as yet.

People of another 67 unions are struggling for adequate relief. The administrative efforts to distribute relief are falling short everywhere, while individuals and private organisations are also not being able to reach those who need it the most.

The information gathered by The Daily Star from the grassroots shows that adequate relief is not reaching the people in remote areas even days after the flood hit them.

Of the unions still waiting for any kind of humanitarian aid, 36 are in Sylhet district, 38 in Sunamganj, eight in Moulvibazar and 11 in Habiganj.

Meanwhile, NGO aids have reached 57,860 households in 24 upazilas of Sylhet, Sunamganj and Netrakona till yesterday, said a media release.

### RELIEF STILL SCARCE

Aytun, a resident of Chatlapur village of Jaintiapur union, where waters went up chest-high about 10 days ago, has spent the last nine days eating dry flattened rice (chira).

Yesterday was a good day for her, and her two children and husband, as they could finally cook some rice. But there was nothing else.

She had fixed bamboo poles horizontally across her hut and built a shelf, where she and her family spent the last week and half, while the flood battered her home.

"We had some food in the beginning ... But the last nine days were

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## Schools in the north brace for hard times

STAR REPORT

Academic activities in several hundred educational institutions in the country's north have been suspended for about a week as those have been inundated with floodwater.

Many students are worried as their educational materials have been swept away by floodwater.

In Kurigram and Lalmonirhat, teaching in 337 primary and secondary schools and colleges remain stopped for a week.

Education officials said many schools are now being used as flood shelters. They will resume academic activities after the floodwater recedes.

"My school has been shut for the last eight days. People are now

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## 'With no courage to return, how can he lead?'

PM questions Tarique's leadership ability

STAR REPORT

How can BNP leader Tarique Rahman lead the party when he does not even dare to return home, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said.

"If a political leader has no courage to return home, how can he lead?" she said at a discussion yesterday, marking the 73rd founding anniversary of the Awami League, reports UNB.

Hasina, also the AL president,



presided over the programme, held at the party central office on Bangabandhu Avenue. She joined the event via videoconference from the Gono Bhaban.

The PM said it was incorrect to say that Tarique was not allowed to return home. "Nobody ousted him. He willingly went abroad and then didn't return."

Tarique went abroad during the tenure of the then caretaker

PHOTO ON PAGE 3

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## Padma Bridge: A display of local industries' prowess

B1

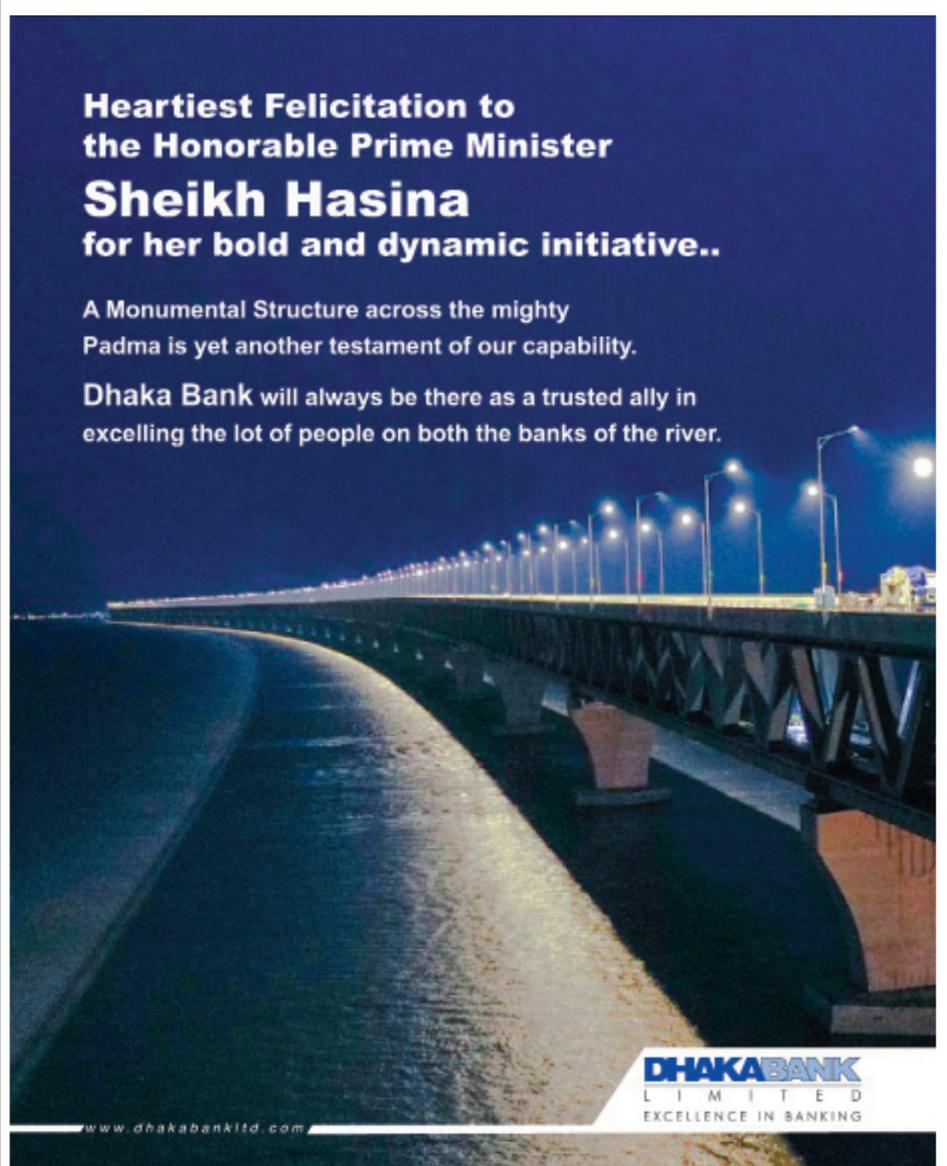
## Time for Padma Bridge Plus

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## Heartiest Felicitation to the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her bold and dynamic initiative..

A Monumental Structure across the mighty Padma is yet another testament of our capability.

Dhaka Bank will always be there as a trusted ally in excelling the lot of people on both the banks of the river.



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## Jamuna Bank Remembers Its Sponsor Director on his 47<sup>th</sup> Birthday



Anindya Majumder (Bappu)  
24 June 1975 | 16 January 2007

On his 47<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary, we honour and cherish the memory of **Anindya Majumder (Bappu)**, a loving son, a doting brother, a devoted friend and a dedicated professional.

He had been a founding director of Jamuna Bank Ltd. and a director at New Generation Construction Co. Ltd.

We miss him dearly everyday,  
**Family, Friends And Colleagues**