

## A new hope for the South

SUZIT KUMAR DAS

After walking for 30 minutes, Rabeya Begum (38) of Chadpai village in Bagerhat's Mongla upazila reached Pachar Mor area in Madaripur to join the Padma Bridge inauguration. Even though she had to walk an additional 8 kilometres to Kathalbari Ferry Ghat to reach the venue, she said, "Today's a day for joy as we're entering a new era."

Thousands like her from 21 south-western districts, gathered in Kathalbari Ferry Ghat area on the occasion yesterday.

To witness the inaugural ceremony, freedom fighter Khan Abdul Malek (72) of Bhandaria upazila in Pirojpur came to Kathalbari Ferry Ghat. But he had to get down from the bus as there was a long tailback on Bhanga-Mawa Expressway.

He said, "This bridge is our pride. It has reduced distance with Dhaka. So I came here to see the bridge of our dreams with my brother, sons and nephews."

Rauf Hawladar (40), a resident of Mongla, arrived at Pachar Mor around 8:30am. He said, "I'm elated that from now on we'll be able to reach Dhaka in only five hours."

Provas Biswas (45), owner of a shrimp farm in the same area, said, "We have to send shrimp to Dhaka every day. We needed one day or more to reach Dhaka. Now that time will reduce significantly."

Monira Sultana (46) of South Korarcha village in Madaripur's Shibchar upazila said, "I've reached this place after walking 45 minutes from our house. Most of our village's homemakers have come here to witness the inauguration. I cannot express how helpful this will be for us."

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The people of Mawa in Munshiganj and Jajira in Shariatpur were in a festive mood yesterday owing to the opening ceremony of the Padma Bridge. Thousands from across the country started to throng the areas since morning to catch a glimpse of the bridge. This photo was taken from the Jajira point.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

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## PABNA MENTAL HOSPITAL

### Ex-director among five sued for embezzling Tk 88 lakh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

The Anti-Corruption Commission has sued former director of Pabna Mental Hospital and four others for allegedly embezzling Tk 88 lakh through manipulating prices of essential commodities while making a purchase.

The assistant director of ACC, Pabna filed six cases against former director Dr Tonmoy Prokash Bishwas, former marketing officer Humayu Kabir, and bidders HM Foyzal, HM Rejaul and HM Arefin — all of whom are siblings — with the ACC Pabna office on Wednesday.

When market price of each litre of soybean oil was Tk 103, Pabna Mental Hospital bought it at Tk 139; when each kilo of potato was Tk 15, the authorities bought it at Tk 37.5 in 2017.

Similarly, they bought each kilo of rice at Tk 54.5, against the market price of Tk 40 in 2018.

ACC has found embezzlement of Tk 88.3 lakh in Pabna Mental Hospital during 2017-18 and 2018-19 through six different biddings. The authorities bought food and necessary

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# 10,000 students at health risk

## 17 illegal brickfields operating near schools in Brahmanbaria

MASUK HRIDOY, Brahmanbaria

Several brick kilns, built near different educational institutions, have been operating in Brahmanbaria, defying law and denying the locals' objections.

Harmful smoke emitted from the kilns is entering the schools directly, putting students and teachers at risk of health hazards.

According to Department of Environment's (DoE) Brahmanbaria office, at least 17 brickfields have been set up near educational institutions. As a result, more than 10,000 students are at health risk.

Under the existing law, it is prohibited to set up brickfields within 1,000 metres of any educational institution, marsh or farmland, hill, government road or inhabiting area.

But local administrations did not take any effective steps against the kiln owners responsible for this violation, alleged locals.

According to DoE, Mehdi Bricks is located near Khalapara Government Primary School in Suhilpur union of Brahmanbaria Sadar upazila. Paban Bricks is only



Even though it is illegal to set up brickfields within 1,000 metres of any educational institution under existing law, 17 fields have been set up in close proximity to several schools in Brahmanbaria -- putting almost 10,000 students in the region at risk of health complications.

PHOTO: STAR

300 metres away from Bakail Government Primary School in the same area. There is a government primary school within 600 metres of Arab bricks, adjacent to Gokarnaghat in Brahmanbaria municipal area. There's also another kiln named Rony brickfield next to it. These two are located within 500 metres of the scope of the municipal area.

Messrs Bharasa Bricks and Mia Bhai and Co (Azim Bricks) at Sindhura village in Natai Dakkhin union of the upazila are located beside a government primary school

and high school. Two brick kilns have been built along the riverbank, only 550 metres from Krishnanagar Abdul Jabbar High School in Nabinagar upazila.

Bhuiyan Bricks is 500 metres away from Rampur Government Primary School in Bijoyagar upazila. Another kiln, Madina Bricks, is located at the same distance from the school.

There is a primary school near Ratan Bricks in Tamonipur village of the upazila's Pattan union. Haji Bricks is located 600 metres from

Chandura Government Primary School. T&C Bricks is also 600 metres away from Budhanti Ahladi Government Primary School.

The New Mayer Doa Bricks of Rajabariakandi village in Sarail upazila is 600 metres from Baishamura Government Primary School, and next to it is Subarna Bricks. There is also a primary school near New Samata Bricks in Shahjadapur village of the same upazila.

Titas Bricks is 600 metres from Mugra Government Primary School in Akhaura

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These women transport tiffin made by the loved ones of office-goers from Dhaka's Kamrangirchar to Showari Ghat every day. In each basket, they carry food for 10 to 12 persons and get a monthly pay of Tk 500. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

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## 'Of pride, dream and strength'

### Padma Bridge opening covered in int'l media

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The international media widely covered the opening of the Padma Bridge, highlighting the self-reliance and confidence of Bangladesh in successfully implementing the project that not only connects the country's southwest region to the capital but also the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway network.

They also highlighted how Bangladesh implemented the \$3.6 billion mega project with domestic funding after the World Bank in 2012 found elements of corruption involving a Canadian construction firm in the plans for the Padma Bridge and decided to stay away from funding \$1.2 billion for the project.

News agency AP report titled "Bangladesh marks

## Schoolgirl killed in road accident

### Another student dies in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

At least two people were killed and one was injured in road crashes in two districts during the last two days, report our correspondents.

In Thakurgaon, a 12-year-old schoolgirl was killed at Goalkari village of Baliadangi upazila yesterday, when a motorbike hit the girl while she was crossing the road around 8:00am, said police.

The deceased is Sadia Akhter Munni, daughter of Sadekul Islam of the village and sixth-grader of Baliadangi Girls' High School.

Locals took her to Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital, where she died around 10:00am.

A case was filed in this connection.

In Dinajpur, a college student was killed and another injured, as their motorcycle collided head-on with an easy-bike in Birampur upazila on Friday evening.

The deceased is Foyzal Hossain (20), a college student hailing from the district's Nawabganj upazila. Sazzad Hossain (17) was injured seriously.

Police said when Foyzal and Sazzad arrived at Beldanga village, the bike collided with an easy-bike, leaving the duo injured around 7:00pm.

Locals took them to Birampur Upazila Health Complex, but Foyzal died on the way there.

Police seized the easy-bike.

## 35 dengue patients hospitalised

UNB, Dhaka

Thirty-five more dengue patients have been hospitalised in 24 hours till yesterday morning.

Among them, 33 patients were admitted to different hospitals in Dhaka during the period, according to Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

As many as 127 dengue patients, including 118 in the capital, are now receiving treatment at hospitals across the country.

On Tuesday, DGHS reported the first death of the season from the mosquito-borne viral disease.

This year, it has recorded 920 dengue cases and 792 recoveries so far.

Dengue — a leading cause of serious illness and death in some Asian and Latin American countries — was first reported in Bangladesh in 2000 and claimed 93 lives; 105 dengue patients, including 95 in Dhaka division, died in 2021.

## Four of a family injured in fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four members of a family were injured in a fire followed by an explosion in Old Dhaka's Agasadek Lane early yesterday.

The injured — Israfil Hussain (62), his wife Salma Begum (50), their son Imran (30) and daughter Shahzadi (24) — were admitted to Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery with 20 to 50 percent burn injuries.

The family were sleeping when the explosion occurred around 4:45am on the ground floor of a four-storey building near Bangladesh Playground.

Hearing screams, locals rushed there and took them to the hospital, said Tarif Alarm, a nephew of Israfil.

All the belongings inside the house were damaged in the explosion, he said.

Shahjahan Shikder, deputy assistant director of fire service media cell, said on information fire service rushed to the spot and took one of the injured to the hospital.

Fire officials were investigating to ascertain the cause behind the explosion.

## Boy found dead in Tongi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A 14-year-old boy of Rangpur's Gangachara upazila was found dead in Dhaka's Tongi on Friday.

The deceased is Md Rubel (14), son of Mofizul Islam of the upazila.

He went to Tongi a week ago to start a job and support his family.

Mofizul said his neighbour Abdul Jalil's son Jamil Mia runs a shop in Tongi.

Jamil offered to employ Rubel at his shop. As the family agreed, Rubel left his village for Tongi on June 16 and started working at the shop.

But on Thursday, Jamil informed Mofizul that Rubel was seriously ill and asked him to visit Dhaka.

Mofizul went to Tongi and found his son dead at the place Jamil lives