



PADMA BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION

Cost will be realised in 18-20 years

PM tells parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday told a parliament session that the construction cost of Padma Bridge would be realised through toll collection in just 18 to 20 years, which is a much shorter period than anticipated earlier.

Referring to allegations that the construction cost was too high, she said the cost was reasonable when compared to the cost of bridges built in contemporary times.

"There was no chance for corruption here," she said in her speech.

It was earlier thought that realising the cost would take 25 years, Hasina said in her nearly 45-minute speech, which was mostly about the government's success in constructing the 6.15km bridge, defying all

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



Fishing boats lie at anchor on Chila canal near the Sundarbans, as a 65-day fishing ban has been in force since May 20 to ensure smooth breeding of fish. Meanwhile, the fishermen of the area have been on the hunt for other jobs to feed their families. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Eid-ul-Azha on July 10

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The holy Eid-ul-Azha, the second largest religious festival of the Muslims, will be celebrated across the country on July 10 with due solemnity and religious fervour.

The National Moon Sighting Committee came up with the decision at a meeting at the Baitul Mukarram national mosque as the moon of the holy month of Zilhaj was sighted in the sky of Bangladesh yesterday.

The Eid-ul-Azha is celebrated on the 10th of Zilhaj as Hazrat Ibrahim (AS), on this day some 4,500 years ago, offered to sacrifice his beloved son Hazrat Ismail (AS), who willingly submitted to the will of his father, to please Almighty Allah.

But the Almighty in His benign mercy spared Hazrat Ismail (AS) and instead sent a ram to be sacrificed.

To commemorate this historic event, Muslims

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Five killed as lorry ploughs into crowd



A CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

Five vegetable traders were killed and four others injured as a lorry driver lost control of the vehicle and ploughed into a crowd in Narsingdi's Raipura upazila yesterday.

Quoting locals, Azizul Hoque, in-charge of Bhairab fire service station, said the Sylhet-bound lorry lost control and hit nine people while trying to overtake another lorry in Mahmudabad Bazar along the Dhaka-Sylhet highway around 8:00am.

On information, police and fire service officials rushed to the spot and rescued them.

Two of them died on the spot and three while being taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, he added.

The injured were undergoing treatment at Narsingdi Sadar Hospital, and the bodies of the deceased were sent to the hospital morgue for autopsies.

The deceased are Faruk Mia, Md Masakin, Ripon Mia, Shah Jahan Mia and Bacchu Mia. They are aged between 30 and 65 and residents of Mirzapur union of Raipura upazila.

Sub-inspector Mozammel Hossain, in-charge of Bhairab highway police, said both the lorries were seized, but the drivers managed to flee.

Bus fares rise on 15 southwestern routes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) yesterday raised the bus fare for 15 routes via the Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga Expressway as part of the government's plan to monetise the country's first expressway.

From today, the road authority will impose a toll on vehicles for using the 55-kilometre-long expressway, formally known as Jatir Pita Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Highway.

For 40-seater buses, the fare, which will come into action from today, has been increased by Tk 31 to Tk 66.

The fare has also been refixed for 51-seater buses, but the rate could not be known immediately. The total fare for a 51-seater bus would be relatively lower than the 40-seater bus.

This will be the second time in a month that the authorities have increased the bus fare.

Earlier on June 8, the BRTA raised the bus fare on 13 routes by Tk 10-11 to incorporate the toll for Padma bridge, which opened to traffic on June 26. Later, the authorities reset the fare for two more routes.

Of the 15 routes whose fare rates were re-set yesterday, 12 are from Dhaka's Sayedabad to different southwest destinations while three are from Chattogram and Cox's Bazar via Dhaka, according to BRTA officials.

As per the new rate, the fare for a 40-seater bus travelling from Dhaka to Barishal via Bhanga would be Tk 454, which is Tk 33 more than the

previous rate.

The highest increase was seen on the Dhaka-Kuakata route via Barishal, Patuakhali: by Tk 66 to Tk 767.

The bus fare from Dhaka to Gopalganj would be Tk 423; from Dhaka to Khulna via Gopalganj would be Tk 575; from Dhaka to Shariatpur via Janjira would Tk 257; from Dhaka to Pirojpur via Barishal Tk 580; from Dhaka to Pirojpur via Gopalganj, Bagerhat Tk 619.

The bus fare from Dhaka to Patuakhali via Barishal would be Tk 561; from Dhaka to Madaripur Tk 344; from Dhaka to Satkhira via Gopalganj, Khulna Tk 689; from Dhaka to Faridpur via Bhanga Tk 323; from Dhaka to Shariatpur via Buriganga second bridge Tk 257.

The bus fare from Cox's Bazar to Barishal via Chattogram, Dhaka's Postagola Bridge, Bhanga, Madaripur would be Tk 1,388; from Chattogram to Khulna via Dhaka's Postagola bridge, Bhanga Tk 1,192;

and from Chattogram to Barguna via Dhaka's Postagola bridge, Barishal, Patuakhali Tk 1,282.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the expressway in March 2020.

From today, to use the expressway, the toll for a medium-sized truck would be Tk 550, for a bus Tk 495, for a car Tk 140 and for a motorcycle Tk 30, according to the notice issued on Wednesday.

The vehicle has to pay a separate toll for the Padma bridge. To cross the Padma river through the 6.15km bridge, a medium-sized truck has to pay Tk 2,100 as toll, a bus Tk 2,400, a car Tk 750 and a motorcycle Tk 100.

Fares have been hiked to monetise Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga Expressway from today

Yunus Centre responds to allegations by PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus considers the Padma Bridge a long-cherished dream of all Bangladeshis, and there was no question of his getting in the way of realising that dream.

Yunus said he never made any complaint to the World Bank or any other organisation or individual about the Padma Bridge.

"So, the matter is purely imaginary," said a Yunus Centre statement issued on Wednesday night in response to allegations made by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina recently.

The removal of Yunus from the position of managing director of Grameen Bank is an independent story

SEE PAGE 7 COL 6



THE GENTLE GIBBON

A male Hoolock Gibbon hangs merrily from a tree branch in the Rajkandi Protected Forest in Moulvibazar. According to wildlife researchers, even four decades ago, there were at least 3,000 of these animals scattered across forests in the country. However, due to destruction of habitats, their number has declined to just a few hundred. The animals usually feast on small insects, fruits, flowers and bird eggs, and are usually distinguished by the white stripes above their eyes. They prefer to stay in groups with no more than five members.

PHOTO: TIMU HOSSAIN

TEACHER MURDER Prime accused led teen gang in his locality Says Rab at briefing

STAR REPORT

The prime accused in the Ashulia teacher murder case, Ashraf Ahsan Jitu, was the leader of a local teen gang, said Rab.

If anyone complained against him to his family, he would threaten, intimidate, or attack the complainant.

Besides, Jitu, known as "Jitu Dada" to his gang members, used to arrange showdowns in his locality to create panic.

Commander Khandaker Al Mooin, director (legal and media wing) of Rab, shared this at a press conference yesterday



SEE PAGE 7 COL 6

TEACHER'S HUMILIATION Insecurity grips his family

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A Narail college teacher, who was publicly humiliated by being forced to wear a garland of shoes around his neck on June 18, has been away from home since the incident.

Meanwhile, his wife and three daughters are spending their days in fear, even though police have been deployed at his Borokula village home of Narail Sadar upazila.

"We are scared that agitators might attack our house, which is why my father has taken shelter elsewhere," said Shyama Biswas, the eldest daughter of Swapan Kumar Biswas, acting principal of Mirzapur United Degree College.

"I'm not going to college and my two younger sisters have also stopped attending school. We too are feeling insulted," she told The Daily Star over phone yesterday.

Meanwhile, four people have been arrested after a case was filed in connection with the incident.

The arrestees are: Shawon, 26, and Rahmat Ullah, 22, workers of mobile servicing shops, Rimon, 20, an auto-rickshaw driver, and Monirul Islam, 25, a madrasa teacher,

Some locals said the teacher did not commit any offence, but was a victim of an internal feud between the college teachers.

On June 27, the district administration held a meeting with locals, law enforcers and other stakeholders to discuss the issue. At the meeting, some raised the issue of the feud, sources said.

Achin Chakraborty, president of the college governing body, yesterday said he was in Dhaka

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

China's Mars probe photographs the entire red planet

CNN ONLINE

After more than a year on the surface of Mars, China's Tianwen-1 probe has taken images covering the entire red planet, the country's space agency announced Wednesday.

Tianwen-1, which means "quest for heavenly truth," was launched in 2020 and landed on Mars last May, when the Zhurong rover on board started its mission of patrolling and exploring the planet while the orbiter spun overhead.

In a statement, China's National Space Agency (CNSA) said the probe has now completed all its assigned tasks, including taking medium-resolution images covering the entire planet.

The images, posted by the space agency on social media, show the Martian landscape's rugged terrain: dusty red dunes, shield volcanoes,

SEE PAGE 7 COL 6