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Is Bangladesh making a U-turn on renewable energy?



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Govts no longer able to hide repression: HRW chief



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Plight and struggle of tea workers continue



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SATIRE Pay workers less, prevent money laundering

BRT set to miss new deadline

Slow pace of work, controversies over safety issues holding the project back

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY, back from Gazipur

With the project authorities of BRT Line-3 having already failed to achieve their revised target, a recent tragedy has left them in further difficulties in meeting the proposed deadline of December 2022.

While the physical work on the Dhaka-Gazipur corridor remains suspended for about two weeks, the authorities cannot clearly say when it can fully resume.

They said the two Chinese contractors of the project have to take measures to ensure 100 percent safety of the site. Then, the consultants will inspect and if they are satisfied, the work will resume.

But the contractors have not submitted their safety plan yet, 11 days after five people were crushed to death on August 15 when a crane toppled over, making a box girder segment fall on their car on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Uttara.



Original deadline 2016

Revised deadline June 2022

Proposed new deadline December 2022

Authorities now target completion of physical work by March next year and make BRT functional by June



"They [contractors] might think they have done enough regarding safety, but we think there is scope to do better."

RHD Chief Engineer AKM Manir Hossain Pathan

Two children were among those killed in the incident, which occurred due to negligence in ensuring safety, according to experts and officials.

While visiting the project site in Gazipur yesterday, this correspondent saw safety barriers made of corrugated sheets and cautionary signboards at different points. But some areas remained unprotected.

Contacted, RHD Chief Engineer AKM Manir Hossain Pathan, who visited the site yesterday with several directors of Dhaka Bus Rapid Transit Company Ltd (DBRTCL), said there is still a lack of safety arrangements there.

"They [contractors] might think they have done enough regarding safety but we think there is scope to do better," he told this correspondent.

Replying to another question about the project delay, he said, "We can't allow them to work until foolproof safety is ensured."

The Tk 4,268.38 crore project was undertaken to build a 20.50km dedicated bus service road from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to Gazipur. It was supposed to be completed at a cost of Tk 2,037.85 crore by December 2016, the original deadline.

The deadline was extended to June this year but the project made 78 percent progress by that time.

The authorities, at a press conference in September last year, announced that the physical work of the project would be completed by September this year and the BRT service would be operational from December this year.

Earlier this year, they again sought to extend the deadline to December this year, with a one-year defects liability period. The proposal is now pending with the planning ministry, sources said.

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An aquatic weed harvester tied to the bank of the Buriganga in the capital's Lalbagh. The equipment, brought from Germany, will be used to remove garbage and weeds from the river as part of DSCC's initiative to recover the old Buriganga channel. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

A sheer waste of public money

Ponds dug for drinking water now used for fish farming

MOSTAFA SHABUI, Bogura

A government project undertaken to supply drinking water to locals in Gaibandha's Gobindganj by re-excavating ponds has been rendered fruitless, with the zila parishad leasing out many of the waterbodies for fish farming.

The project, which cost Tk 1.5 crore, itself was also questionable as it was implemented without assessing if locals would even drink the water, ultimately leading to complete waste of public money.

The Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) re-excavated 26 ponds between 2018 and 2020, and handed them back to the zila parishad on January 27, 2021.

Visiting different villages in the upazila, this correspondent found that at least seven of the ponds were leased out, according to the lessees, for fish

farming by Gaibandha Zila Parishad.

Some of the lessees claimed all of the ponds under the project were leased out by the parishad. Villagers of the area also alleged that the parishad was giving leases to influential people.

Even acknowledging that the ponds should not be leased out for fish farming, Gaibandha Zila Parishad Administrator Ataur Rahman Ata admitted to leasing one of the ponds out for fish farming.

According to Rezwan Hossain, the executive engineer of DPHE in Gaibandha, fish farming would render the ponds unsuitable for providing drinking water.

But Ata, the administrator and also a vice-chairman of Jatiya Party's central committee, said the DPHE had not explained to them that the ponds were fit for providing drinking water when handing them back to the zila parishad.

Gaibandha Zila Parishad CEO Abdur

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SURVEY ON SAFETY IN PUBLIC PLACES 87pc women say they're harassed

Half of the 5,187 respondents say public transport 'mostly unsafe' for women

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An online survey of over 5,000 women spread across 24 districts in the country has revealed that nearly 87 percent of them have faced some form of harassment at least once in their lives.

The findings also revealed that 36 percent women face sexual harassment regularly on public transport, like buses, launches and trains, and at terminals. As such, more than half, 57 percent, of the respondents consider public transport as the most unsafe.

Other than public transport, streets, shopping malls, and online platforms too happen to be places where women have been targeted.

The United Nations Development Programme (Bangladesh), National Human Rights Commission, and Centre for Research and Information jointly conducted the survey in May-June this year and published the results yesterday.

They reached out to 5,187 women in the districts through various mediums such as social media, text message, and email.

The survey has also revealed that they were harassed the most during the day. A whopping 52 percent said they were harassed during day with most incidents concentrated in the afternoons.

The bleakest of all findings, however, is the response to the harassment. Only 36 percent protested when they were harassed and

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DEMO OVER PRICE HIKE OF ESSENTIALS

55 BNP activists hurt in 'attacks by AL men' in 3 dists

STAR REPORT

At least 55 BNP leaders and activists were injured in attacks allegedly by Awami League men in Munshiganj, Noakhali and Narayanganj yesterday.

The attacks were made when the BNP men were organising protests against the price hikes of fuel and daily commodities.

In Munshiganj's Sreenagar upazila, around 20 BNP leaders and activists were wounded as Chhatra League and Jubo League men swooped on them, said Hafizul Islam Khan, member secretary of the upazila unit BNP.

He said they were gathering to stage demonstrations at Jashurgoan against the price hike of daily commodities.

To foil the programme, police provoked BCL and Jubo League men to attack around 10:00am, he alleged.

He said, "I was also pushed to the road and beaten up by a group of Chhatra League and Jubo League men."

He said the attackers were equipped with sticks and sharp weapons.

Joyal Abedin James, president of the upazila unit Jubo Dal, alleged that police first started beating them up and then Chhatra League men joined.

A video clip of the attack has gone viral in social media.

In the clip, Saddam Hossain, a member of the upazila unit Jubo League, was seen beating up BNP leader Hafizul.

It also shows some other Jubo League and BCL men wielding sharp weapons and sticks.

Contacted, Saddam said BNP leaders first barred them when they brought out a procession observing the

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A BNP supporter covers his head with his arms as three AL activists attack him in Sreenagar, Munshiganj yesterday. Ruling party men swooped on a BNP rally organised to protest the price hikes of fuel and essentials.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Asia Cup begins today



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cricket fanatics can brace themselves for some exhilarating T20 contests over the next 16 days as the 15th edition of the Asia Cup is set to begin today with the game between hosts Sri Lanka and Afghanistan

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Dear Readers, Opinion page will come out twice a week - Friday and Saturday, to accommodate an extra Sports page for cricket's Asia Cup. We will revert to regular Opinion page after the tournament ends on Sept 11. We apologise for the inconveniences caused. We will, however, make it up by publishing more opinions digitally.