

I must be very honest, brutally honest with you, Europe isn't strong enough right now. We would be in trouble without the United States.

Finnish PM Sanna Marin's on Europe's capabilities in the wake of Russia's war on Ukraine



All behind schedule

None of 35 ongoing railway projects is to meet deadline; cost rises by Tk 32,008 crore

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Bangladesh Railway is implementing 35 projects to expand its services, but none of them would be completed on time, raising questions about its capability in executing such a large number of development schemes concurrently.

Deadlines of 25 projects have already been extended — from one year to 11 years. Eleven of them saw cost escalations and even expenditure of a project rose by 873.76 percent.

The original cost of the 35 projects was Tk 1,08,020 crore. But it went up to Tk 1,40,028 crore after revisions, meaning BR has to spend Tk 32,008 crore more, which is more than the Padma Bridge project cost.

The cost of Padma Bridge project is Tk 30,193 crore so far. Although deadlines of 10 other projects have not expired yet, construction or procurement process did not start in any of them. So, their deadlines have to be stretched.

There is also a possibility that costs of many of the projects would go up as delays usually increase costs.

Long delay in project implementation costs more public money. Most of the amount being spent on the projects came from foreign loan. On the other hand, people's wait for an improved railway service is getting longer.

More importantly, the government's plan to revive railway, which had been neglected for decades, stumbled although Tk 71,113 crore has been injected into the sector for its development since the Awami League assumed the office in 2009.

The Daily Star found a grim picture after analysing

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



Having already secured qualification to the last 16, Brazil sent out a second-string side for what was expected to be a simple game for the five-time champions against Cameroon. Instead, the Indomitable Lions lived up to their billing and recorded their first win at the World Cup in 20 years with a late strike from Vincent Aboubakar, who happily received his second yellow card for an expectedly over-the-top celebration.

PHOTO: REUTERS



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Shocking, inhuman

Woman killed as car drags her over a km on DU campus

DU CORRESPONDENT

A car rammed into a motorcycle, causing the female pillion passenger to fall and somehow get stuck under the car on Dhaka University campus.

With the woman lodged between the front and rear axles, the motorist then drove for about a kilometre, ignoring the screams of shocked onlookers, before people in the Nilkhet area stopped him.

The woman, Rubina Akhter, 45, died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 4:30pm, about an hour after she was taken there, said Masud Mia, an assistant sub-inspector at DMCH Police Outpost. She was the mother of a schoolboy.

DU Proctor Golam Rabbani said the driver of the car was Azhar Jafar Shah, a former assistant professor of international relations at DU. He was sacked in 2018 over absenteeism.

He is also being treated at DMCH for injuries he suffered when students and pedestrians assaulted him after stopping the car.

The woman's brother-in-law Nurul

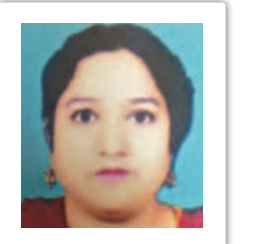


PHOTO ON PAGE 3

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

DELAY IN IMPLEMENTATION

7 PROJECTS TAKING 6-11 YRS ADDITIONAL TIME

- Chattogram-Cox's Bazar rail link
- Khulna-Mongla rail line
- Rehabilitation of Kulara-Shahbazpur rail line
- Procurement of 70 locomotives
- Dhaka-Tongi-Joydebpur railway expansion
- Upgradation of important level crossings, East Zone
- Upgradation of important level crossings, West Zone

8 PROJECTS NEED 3-5 YRS ADDITIONAL TIME

10 PROJECTS NEED 1-2 YRS ADDITIONAL TIME

COST ESCALATION

4 PROJECTS SAW OVER 100% RISE IN COST

- Ctg-Cox's Bazar rail link (874%)
- Rehabilitation of Kulara-Shahbazpur line (477%)
- Khulna-Mongla rail line (148%)
- Upgradation of level crossings, East Zone (112%)

7 PROJECTS SAW 13% TO 92% RISE IN COST

DESERT FEST

Are upsets worth the trade-off?



SAMAMA RAHMAN

While some stunning upsets have dominated headlines throughout the 2022

World Cup, not least Japan's stunning 2-1 win over Spain on Thursday, neutrals must decide whether a giant-killing is a worthy opportunity cost for missing once-in-a-decade encounters as the round of 16 starts tonight.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2

Cameroon trump second-string Brazil

Tite's team to face South Korea in last 16

REUTERS, Lusail

A late goal by skipper Vincent Aboubakar ended Cameroon's 20-year wait for a win at the World Cup as the Indomitable Lions bowed out in style by beating a much-changed Brazil 1-0 at the Lusail Stadium on Friday.

With qualification already in the bag after wins over Serbia and Switzerland, Brazil still won Group G, ahead of Switzerland on goal difference, and will face Group H runners-up South Korea, who beat Portugal 2-1, in the next round.

Cameroon, whose last win at the World Cup was in 2002 against Saudi Arabia, were on the back foot for most of the match but sprung to life at the death. Aboubakar powered a header past Ederson then was sent off for collecting a second yellow for taking off his jersey in celebration.

The match played out in a relatively subdued atmosphere in the cavernous Lusail Stadium, the tournament's biggest venue, with Brazil's reserves eager to impress but Tite's side unable to assert their usual flair.

Gabriel Martinelli was Brazil's liveliest player and nearly put the five-time champions ahead in the 14th minute when he was picked out by Fred's ball over the top, but the Arsenal forward's header drew a fine reaction save from Devis Epassy.

Cameroon offered nearly no attacking threat until the first half injury time, when Nicolas Mouni Ngamaleu's cross was met with a powerful downward header by Bryan Mbeumo that Ederson clawed away one-handed at full stretch.

Tite had seen enough and made a triple change soon after the interval, bringing on Marquinho for the injured Alex Telles, and replacing Rodrigo and Fred with Everton Ribeiro and Bruno Guimaraes.

The substitutes stirred Brazil into a sudden flurry of chances with Epassy forced into action three times in as many minutes.

First, Martinelli stung the Cameroon keeper's palms with a snap shot in the 56th

minute. Next, Eder Militao tried his luck from the ensuing corner coaxing a fumble out of the Cameroon keeper, who recovered to scramble the ball out to safety, before the lively Antony got in on the act, forced Epassy into a diving save to keep out his curling effort.

Tite sent on Pedro in the 64th minute and Rafinha in the 79th as Brazil sought to save their perfect record in the group, but Cameroon clung on until Aboubakar arrived in the right place at the right time to seize his moment.



Netherlands v USA 9:00pm

Argentina v Australia 1:00am

BNP ready for big show in own backyard

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA and ANWAR ALI from Rajshahi

The BNP wants to show its strength by holding a successful event in Rajshahi, the last of its divisional "showdowns" ahead of the much-hyped Dhaka rally on December 10, a senior party leader said yesterday.

"It's the last divisional rally outside Dhaka. People have already shown no-confidence in the government. Our rally in Rajshahi will prove that the area is BNP's stronghold," Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku, the party's standing committee member and also an adviser to the rally committee, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Defying the transport strike and alleged obstructions by police, several thousand BNP leaders and activists from eight districts of the northern division have already thronged the city to join today's rally.

The law enforcers yesterday did not allow them to enter the meeting venue. They will be permitted when the rally will be held, the law enforcers said.

Around 100 marquees were set up at Hazrat Shah Makhdam Central Eidgah ground near the meeting venue — Madrasa Maidan. Party men, who came to the city ahead of the rally due to the transport

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Rejoinder, our reply

Moinuddin Ahmed, managing director of The Asiatic Industries Limited, sent in a rejoinder to a report titled "A BPC concern robs state coffers of Tk. 472.7cr" published in The Daily Star on November 4.

In the rejoinder, Ahmed said that Standard Asiatic Oil Company (SAOCL) is not a subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation as it does not receive any subsidy either from the government or BPC. SAOCL is registered as a private limited company under companies act 1913.

The rejoinder said that SAOCL does not have five directors but four directors since its inception.

He also denies Tk 194.7 crore is missing from SAOCL thanks to non-payment of dues for lubricating oil sold by SAOCL to his firm Asiatic Oil Company from fiscal 2011-12 to 2013-14.

"[...] however SACOL's internal accounting books showed that Asiatic Oil paid the said amount by

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



A farmer harvesting Aman paddy in Bogura's Shajahanpur upazila. Growers in six northern districts are happy to have a bumper crop and good price this year. The paddy is being sold for Tk 1,200-1,800 per maund depending on the variety. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

Northern smile

Aman farmers of 6 dists in the north see bumper yield fighting early adverse weather, hikes in fertiliser and fuel prices

MOSTAFA SHABUJ and S DILIP ROY

The bumper yield of Aman paddy and good prices has brought big smiles to the faces of rice growers in six northern districts.

Although production was feared to be low due to poor rainfall during monsoon, the high yield has been attributed to the subsequent favourable weather and hard work by farmers.

Apart from the early adverse weather, farmers had to overcome the twin challenges of fertiliser and fuel price hikes.

This year's high production came as a big relief for the government as it is repeatedly warning of a possible global food crisis next year.

However, it is unlikely to bolster public procurement of Aman as the government's purchase rate is way below the market prices.

"As farmers knew about the global food crisis, they were more careful this time and took extra care of their crops," Md Abu Hossain, deputy director of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), Naogaon, told The Daily Star recently.

Farmers are also happy with the current market prices, which range from Tk 1,200-1,800 per maund (40kg) depending on the variety. Last year, they sold it for Tk 900-1,400.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2

- Aman yield, prices higher this year
- Six northern districts grew Aman on more land
- Last year's Aman yield stood at 2.16 crore tonnes
- Production may rise by around 0.25 tonnes per hectare this year
- Farmers fear fall in prices in coming days