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PADMA BRIDGE

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The first railway bridge over the Buriganga is being constructed in Aliganj area of Narayanganj. The rail line will connect the capital with Padma Bridge and the authorities are aiming to operate trains on it by next June.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

RICKSHAW-PULLER KILLING

Jubo League leader, his aide arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Rab arrested local Jubo League leader and municipality Councillor Kamal Uddin early yesterday over the killing of a rickshaw-puller during Wednesday night's gun violence in Ishwardi, Pabna.

Rab also arrested Kamal's aide Hridoy during a raid on Shoilopara area around 3:15am, said Squadron Leader Tauhidul Mobin Khan.

The arrestees were handed over to Ishwardi Police Station, said a press release.

Kamal, 48, also the president of ward unit Jubo League, his brother Anwar Hossain, a Jubo League activist, and two others were accused in a case filed by the rickshaw-puller's mother Lipi Begum, said Arbinda Sarkar, officer-in-charge of Ishwardi Police Station.

Around 9:00pm on Wednesday, two groups of men were arguing over a crash between a human hauler and a three-wheeler in the Poshchim Tengri area of Ishwardi.

"While the two groups argued, Jubo League activist Anwar Hossain and his associates suddenly appeared at the scene and opened fire at the men taking the human hauler driver's side," said Arbinda.

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Mild cold wave likely to continue Says Met office

BSS, Dhaka

A mild cold wave is sweeping over Naogaon, Dinajpur, Panchagarh, Jashore and Chuadanga and it may continue, the Met office said yesterday.

"The temperature might increase by up to 0.5 degrees Celsius to a maximum of 2 degrees Celsius after tomorrow ... the intensity of cold will decline," said Shahinul Islam, a meteorologist of Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

The day and night temperature may fall again at the end of the next week, said the meteorologist while forecasting weather for the 24 hours from 9:00am yesterday.

In a press release, the Met office said the weather may remain dry with partly cloudy skies across the country. Moderate to thick fog may occur over the country from midnight till morning and it could continue till noon in some places.

Night temperatures may remain nearly unchanged and day temperatures may rise slightly over the country.

According to the release, there is likely to be moderate to severe cold conditions over north, north-western and central parts of the country due to reduced difference between day and night temperatures.

The ridge of sub-continental

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WAR IN UKRAINE

Signs of fighting after truce 'comes into force'

Reports of shelling by both sides in Donetsk; Germany, US agree to send combat vehicles

REUTERS, Kyiv/Kramatorsk

Artillery fire could be heard from the front line in Ukraine yesterday, even after the official start of a unilateral ceasefire declared by Moscow and rejected by Kyiv.

Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the 36-hour ceasefire from midday yesterday to observe Orthodox Christmas. Kyiv has said it has no intention to stop fighting, rejecting the purported truce as a stunt by Moscow to buy time to reinforce troops that have taken heavy losses this week.

Russia's defence ministry said its troops began observing the ceasefire from noon Moscow time (0900 GMT) "along the entire line of contact" in the conflict, but said Ukraine kept up shelling populated areas and military positions.

Reuters could not immediately verify whether the intensity of fighting slowed following the start of the truce. One witness in the Russian-occupied regional capital Donetsk, close to the front, described outgoing artillery fired from pro-Russian positions on the city's outskirts after the truce was meant to take effect.

In the hours prior, rockets slammed into a residential building in the Ukrainian city of Kramatorsk close to the eastern frontline, damaging 14 homes but with

no casualties, the mayor said. Residents described several explosions.

One rescue worker was killed and four others injured after Russian forces shelled a fire department in the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson before the deadline early yesterday, the regional governor said. Reuters could not immediately verify this.

Putin ordered the 36-hour ceasefire in the 10-month-long war in a surprise move

Shortly after the ceasefire was supposed to come into effect, Russian-backed officials accused Ukraine of shelling Donetsk with artillery, Russia's state-run TASS news agency said.

in Thursday, saying it would run through to the end of Russian Orthodox Christmas today.

But Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky rejected the ceasefire out of hand as a ploy for Russia to buy time.

"They now want to use Christmas as a cover, albeit briefly, to stop the advances of our boys ... and bring equipment, ammunition and mobilised troops closer to our positions," Zelensky said in his

Thursday night video address.

Shortly after the ceasefire was supposed to come into effect, Russian-backed officials accused Ukraine of shelling Donetsk with artillery, Russia's state-run TASS news agency said.

Denis Pushilin, the Russian-installed leader in Donetsk, said on Thursday that Putin's order only covered offensive operations and his forces would hit back if fired upon.

Vladimir Saldo, the Russian-installed administrator of Ukraine's Kherson region, described the ceasefire as "a gesture of goodwill," but said the situation on the front lines would not change because of it.

Despite air raid warnings sounding in several regions, no major air strikes were reported by Ukrainian officials after the ceasefire starting time.

The battles had not previously slowed during the festive season and Russia mounted waves of air strikes that hit infrastructure and injured residents in Kyiv over New Year, usually a time of celebration in both Ukraine and Russia.

Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24 last year, starting a war that has killed tens of thousands of people and displaced more than a third of the country's 44 million

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Flexible working hours are good for business: UN

AFP, Geneva

Flexible working arrangements like those introduced during the Covid-19 crisis are not only good for employees but also boost productivity and potentially a business's bottom line, the United Nations said yesterday.

In its first report focusing on work-life balances, the UN's International Labour Organization evaluated the effects of working time, working hours and working time arrangements on the well-being of staff and also on business performance.

"This report shows that if we apply some of the lessons of the Covid-19 crisis and look very carefully at the way working hours are structured, as well as their overall length, we can create a win-win, improving both business performance and work-life balance," Jon Messenger, lead author of the report, said in a statement.

The report examines the crisis response measures governments and businesses used as the pandemic spread, aimed at keeping organisations functioning and workers employed.

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TRADE IN INDIAN RUPEE Delhi holding talks with its neighbours Says RBI governor

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Reserve Bank of India's Governor Shaktikanta Das yesterday said the Indian government and the central bank are in talks with South Asian countries to have cross-border trade in Indian Rupee.

In his keynote address at an IMF conference in New Delhi, he said that with global trade outlook for 2022-23 overcast, greater trade among South Asian countries can enhance opportunities for growth and employment.

"At the central bank level, a key dimension for cooperation has been learning from each other on common goals and challenges... Rupee settlement of cross-border trade and Central Bank Digital Currency, where the RBI has already started moving forward, can also be areas of greater cooperation in future," Das said.

The governor outlined six policy priorities for the South Asian region to deal with critical challenges arising from Covid, inflation, financial market tightening and the Russia-Ukraine war.

"Multiple external shocks... have exerted price pressures on South Asian economies. For successful disinflation, credible monetary policy action, targeted supply-side interventions, fiscal trade policy and administrative measures have become key instruments."

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Carrying sticks and rods, some Chhatra League activists took position on the Sylhet Agricultural University campus during a clash between two groups of BCL men around 3:00pm yesterday. At least 10 students were injured in the infighting.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

BPL starts with contrasting affairs

SPORTS REPORTER

There were contrasting scenes on the opening day of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) as the first game featured a low-scoring affair while the second fixture added some excitement with runs on the board at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

In the first game, Sylhet Strikers romped to a resounding eight-wicket victory against Chattogram Challengers. The evening fixture witnessed Rony Talukdar smash the fastest fifty by a Bangladeshi in the BPL, off just 19 balls, to help Rangpur Riders start the tournament with a 34-run win over defending champions Comilla Victorians.

Chattogram batters struggled on a Mirpur pitch that lived up to its reputation of keeping slow and low as they managed to post a meagre 89 for nine in 20 overs after being asked to bat. Sylhet seamer Rejaur Rahman Raja returned his career-best T20 figures.

With no scoreboard pressure, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza-led Sylhet reached the target with eight wickets

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