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## It put end to illegal power grab PM about 15th amendment

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the 15th amendment to the constitution has strengthened the country's democracy and empowered the people to decide who will go to power.

"Stability has been prevailing in the country since the 15th amendment leading to the long-continued democratic process," she said.

The premier made the remarks while addressing the oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected mayor and councillors of Rangpur City Corporation at her office in the capital.

The 15th amendment, passed by

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A man climbs over the barrier of the central reservation on the Padma Bridge approach road in the capital's Jatrabari to cross to the other side. Though there is a footbridge, *not in picture*, just a few yards away, he put himself in harm's way to get there. The photo was taken on Monday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## TAMBRU BORDER Govt to send zero-line Rohingyas to transit camp

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The government has taken an initiative to transfer 2,889 Rohingyas who fled into Bangladesh territory from a zero-line camp amid intense gunfights between two Myanmar armed groups near Bandarban's Tambru border.

According to officials concerned, the Rohingyas will be moved to Kutupalong transit camp in Cox's Bazar's Ukhiya upazila.

"A national taskforce -- comprised of officials from the administration, law enforcement agencies, international organisations and other agencies involved -- has already begun working to move the Rohingyas," said Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) Mohammed Mizanur Rahman.

On the morning of January 18, a gunfight started between the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) and the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO), both of which were attempting to seize control of the Konarpara Rohingya Camp.

The camp is situated on the zero line near the Tambru border and run by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The firing left one refugee dead and two children wounded, causing widespread panic among people.

The clash continued the next day,

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## UNDERGROUND METRO Tunnels to run as deep as 22 storeys

PM to inaugurate physical work tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's first underground metro rail will be running at a depth of 10 to 30 metres below the ground along most of the 19.87-kilometre route from Dhaka Airport to Kamalapur.

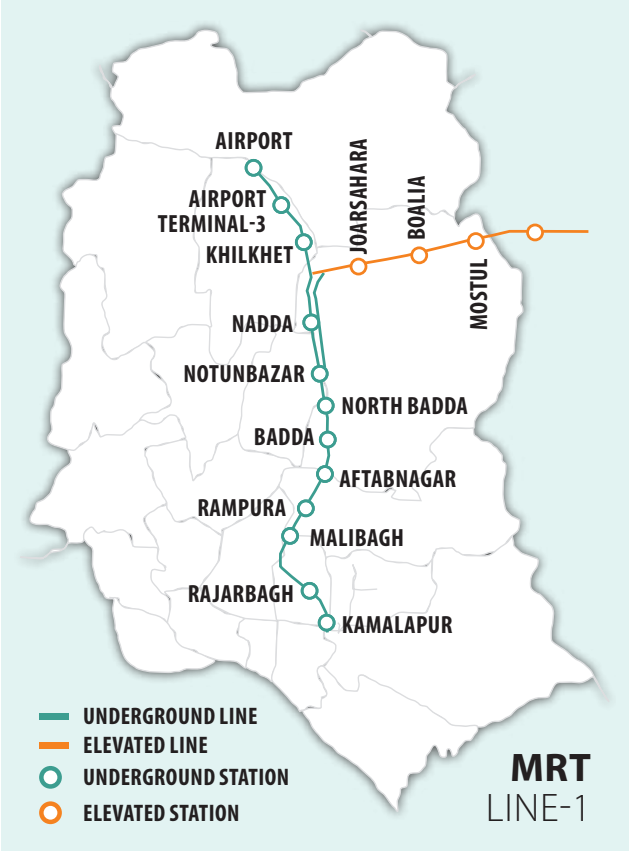
However, the depth would be as deep as 70 metres in Malibagh and Rajarbagh areas. According to engineers, 70 metres is as high as 22 storeys.

The metro authorities revealed the information yesterday as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will be officially opening the physical work of the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Line-1 tomorrow.

MAN Siddique, managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL), the implementing agency of the project, said, "The prime minister will inaugurate the depot development work, which falls under package no-1, on February 2, and with this the construction of the country's first underground metro rail will begin."

The depot will be developed over 92.97 acres of land in Pitalganj of Narayanganj's Rupganj.

The PM will first unveil the project's plaque at Purbachal New Town in Rupganj and then take part in a rally there, Siddique said at a press conference at the DMTCL office in the capital's Eskaton.



The 31.24km MRT-1 rail line will have two parts -- 19.87kms from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to Kamalapur (Airport route) will be underground, while around 11.36kms will be elevated from Notunbazar to Purbachal (Purbachal route).

The airport route will have 12 stations and the Purbachal route will have nine, seven of which will be above the ground.

Two stations on the Purbachal route -- Nadda and Notunbazar -- will be underground and used as a transit for passengers to switch between routes.

Of the Tk 52,561.43 crore required for MRT-1, the government will provide Tk 13,111 crore and Japan will give a soft loan of Tk 39,450 crore.

Officially, the project will be completed by December 2026, after which the line will be able to carry eight lakh passengers daily.

This will be the second metro line in operation after MRT Line-6, which was launched partially in December last year.

**UNDERGROUND METRO DETAILS**

MAN Siddique said the project will be implemented under 12 packages and they have already hired a Japan-Bangladesh joint-venture firm to develop the depot under package no.1.

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## DHAKA AIR HC slams DoE for failure to check pollution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday blasted the Department of Environment (DoE) for its failure in taking effective steps to control air pollution in Dhaka despite its repeated directives.

"The capital city has been at or near the top of most polluted cities in the world for the last seven or eight days. Public health is at serious risk due to the air pollution. You are not taking effective measures to control the situation. Will you kill us by not curbing the air pollution?" the HC bench of Justice KM Kamrul Kader and Justice Mohammad Ali asked DoE's lawyer Amatul Karim Swapna while hearing a writ petition.

The court said some field-level officers of the DoE reportedly have connived with the owners of illegal brick kilns which are polluting the environment.

Those officers don't dispose of on time the appeals of the owners for permission to operate their brick kilns and therefore, so they (owners) can get scope for running the brick kilns, the HC bench said.

Lawyer Amatul Karim told the HC that not only

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## Tuning into brainwave can boost learning

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Briefly showing people a visual flicker that aligns with their individual brainwave cycle can boost their learning ability in a visual identification task, a study has suggested.

Neuroscientists from Cambridge University attached sensors to the heads of 80 participants aged 18 to 35 to sample their brainwave rhythms.

They used these to create a visual pulse -- of a high contrast white square displayed briefly on a dark background followed by a blank interval -- at the same tempo as the individual's alpha wave.

Participants got a 1.5-second dose of personalised pulse to set their brain working at its natural rhythm -- a technique called "entrainment".

They were then given a visual identification task -- detecting targets on a cluttered background.

A brainwave cycle consists of a peak and trough. Some participants received pulses matching the peak of their waves, some the trough, while others got rhythms that were either random or at the wrong rate -- a little faster or slower.

Each participant repeated more than 800 variations of the visual identification task, and the neuroscientists measured how quickly people improved.

The learning rate for those locked into the right rhythm was at least three times faster than for all the other groups.

When participants returned the next day to complete another round of tasks, those who

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## PAKISTAN MOSQUE BLAST Death toll hits 100

REUTERS, Peshawar

Distraught relatives yesterday thronged hospitals in Pakistan's Peshawar to look for their kin a day after a suicide bombing ripped through a crowded mosque in a heavily fortified area of the city, killing 100 people, mostly policemen.

The attack, in the Police Lines district, was the deadliest in a decade to hit this restive, northwestern city near the Afghan border and comes amid a surge in violence against the police. No group has claimed responsibility.

"My son, my child," cried an elderly woman walking alongside an ambulance carrying coffins, as rescue workers stretched wounded people to a hospital emergency unit.

At least 170 people were wounded in the blast, which demolished the upper storey of the mosque as hundreds of worshippers performed noon prayers.

Riaz Mahsud, a senior local government official, said the casualty toll was likely to rise as workers searched through the debris just over 24 hours later.

"So far, 100 bodies have been brought to Lady Reading Hospital," spokesman for the largest medical facility in the city, Mohammad Asim, said in a statement.

Authorities say they do not know how the bomber managed to breach the military and police checkpoints leading into the Police Lines district, a colonial-era, self-contained encampment in the city centre that is home

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A man stacking books for a stall as part of the last-minute preparations for this year's Ekushey Boi Mela, which begins today at the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Submit appeal statement in two months SC asks Jamaat on HC verdict scrapping its registration with EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday gave the Jamaat-e-Islami two months to prepare a concise statement of the party's appeal against a High Court verdict that scrapped its registration with the Election Commission.

A concise statement contains the points on which the appellant's lawyers will place arguments before the court.

Yesterday, the apex court said if Jamaat did not submit the concise statement in two months, its appeal would be defaulted (dismissed).

A three-member bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique, passed the order following a petition filed by the writ petitioner for hearing the appeal.

The two other judges of the bench

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