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Sonamasjid land port to be brought under rail network

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Bangladesh Railway is looking to build a new rail line to bring Sonamasjid land port under the country's rail network.

Sonamasjid is one of the major land ports through which a huge amount of goods are imported annually from India.

BR has already carried out the feasibility study and estimated that Tk 6,114.48 crore would be required to build the 36.74-kilometre-long rail line between Chapainawabganj to Sonamasjid land port.

The proposed timeline for the project is July 2023 to June 2028, including a one-year defect liability period, BR sources said.

The agency held a meeting over the potential project with its Director General

NEW RAIL LINE

ESTIMATED COST
Tk 6,114.48cr

MAIN LINE
36.74km

TIMELINE
July 2023 to June 2028
(with a 1yr liability period)

Quamrul Ahsan in the chair at the Rail Bhaban yesterday, they said.

The meeting decided to send a Pre-Development Project Proposal (PDPP) to the railways ministry as the project requires a big amount of money. The ministry will send the PDPP to Economic Relations Division via the Planning Commission to find foreign financiers, they added.

Currently, Chapainawabganj, the western district, is currently linked with BR network through Rajshahi, but does not have any rail link with Sonamasjid land port.

Different types of goods are regularly being imported from India via the port and are later transported through roadways. According to the Bangladesh Land Port Authority's annual report-2021-22,

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The road at Chairmanbari in the capital's Banani is gridlocked around 2:30pm yesterday, the first working day in Ramadan. Many roads in the city were clogged with bumper-to-bumper traffic in the afternoon.

PHOTO: STAR

2 nurses 'sexually harassed' by civil surgeon, aide

They file complaints with health ministry, Directorate General of Nursing and Midwifery

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

Sexual harassment allegations have surfaced against a physician in Cox's Bazar who, according to a complaint, coerced two nurses into travelling to Saint Martin's Island so they could "entertain" the district's civil surgeon.

The nurses accused Dr Titu Chandra Das, upazila health and family planning officer of Cox's Bazar Sadar, of attempted rape and groping one of them at a resort on the island after they refused to dance with Cox's Bazar Civil Surgeon Dr Mahbubur Rahman.

Dr Titu also made a number of lewd suggestions to the nurses in an effort to please Dr Mahbubur, said a written complaint, submitted to the Health Services Division and Directorate General of Nursing and Midwifery on January 30.

The incident occurred on January 25, the day a telemedicine centre was inaugurated at the 20-bed health centre on the island, added the complaint.

The health ministry officials confirmed receiving the complaint and said an investigation was already underway. The ministry will hold a hearing on the matter tomorrow. The accused physicians and the victims have been asked to appear.

This was not the only complaint of sexual harassment and intimidation against the duo that the ministry has received.

In a separate complaint, also filed on January 30, another nurse said she and her colleague had to leave their dormitory fearing for their safety, as Dr Mahbubur and Dr Titu expressed keen interest in spending time in their room during a government programme in Cox's

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Avdiivka becoming 'post-apocalyptic'

Says a top official of the Ukrainian city as Russian forces step up shelling along frontline

REUTERS, Kyiv

Ukraine shut the eastern town of Avdiivka to non-military personnel yesterday, describing it as a post-apocalyptic wasteland, as Kyiv seeks to break the back of Russia's flagging winter offensive before a counterassault of its own.

A top Ukrainian general said Kyiv was planning its next move after Moscow appeared to shift focus from the small city of Bakhmut, which Russia has failed to capture after half a year of the war's bloodiest fighting, to Avdiivka further south.

Front lines in Ukraine have barely budged for more than four months despite a Russian winter offensive using hundreds of thousands of freshly called-up reservists and convicts recruited as mercenaries from jail. The Ukrainian military aims to wear down Russian forces before a counteroffensive in coming weeks or months.

Ukrainian ground forces commander Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi, who said last week that the counterattack could come "very soon", visited front line troops in the east and said his forces were still repelling Russian attacks on Bakhmut.

Defending the small city in the industrialised Donbas region that Russia has tried to seize for months was a "military necessity", said Syrskyi,

praising Ukrainian resilience in "extremely difficult conditions".

Last week, the Ukrainian military warned that Avdiivka, a smaller town 90 km further south, could become a "second Bakhmut" as Russia turns its attention there. Both towns have been reduced to rubble in fighting that both sides have called a "meat grinder".

"I am sad to say this, but Avdiivka is becoming more and more like a place from post-apocalyptic movies," said Vitaliy Barabash, head of the city's military administration. Only around

Ukrainian military warned that Avdiivka could become a "second Bakhmut" as Russia turns its attention there.

2,000 of a pre-war population of 30,000 remain and he urged them to leave.

Inside Russia, residents of Kireyevsk, in Tula region 220 km south of Moscow, reacted angrily to damage from what the defence ministry said was a Ukrainian drone it downed there on Sunday. The ministry said three people were injured and apartment blocks were hit. It was among the closest such incidents to the Russian capital so far.

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'PISTOL' IN WAIST BCL leader sued under the DSA

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A case was filed against a Bangladesh Chhatra League leader in Faridpur yesterday under Digital Security Act for posting a photo on his Facebook page with a pistol-like object in his waist.

Md Babul Hossain, sub-inspector of Boalmari Police Station, filed the case against Subhradev Singh, 25, the organising secretary of Boalmari upazila unit BCL, Abdul Wahab, officer-in-charge of Boalmari Police Station, told this correspondent.

Subhradev was produced before a district court with a five-day remand prayer, the police official said.

OC Wahab also said the BCL man could not produce the object. After searching a few places with him, whereabouts of the pistol like object could not be found.

"The police could not confirm whether it was a real pistol or a toy. For this, he will be interrogated on remand," added the OC.

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Asteroid big enough to destroy city flying close to Earth

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK



A vast asteroid, big enough to destroy a whole city, is coming closer to Earth.

The space rock will fly between Earth and the Moon, marking an extraordinarily close approach for such a large asteroid. While objects fly so close with some regularity, they are

really this large.

Scientists say there is no chance that the asteroid will cause any harm to Earth. But it will provide an important opportunity for researchers to study it from relatively close-up.

Saturday's close encounter will offer astronomers the chance to study a space rock from just over 100,000 miles (168,000 kilometres) away. That's less than half the distance from here to the moon, making it visible through binoculars and small telescopes.

While asteroid flybys are common, Nasa said it's rare for one so big to come so close – about once a decade. Scientists estimate its size somewhere between 130 feet and 300 feet (40 metres and 90 metres).

Discovered a month ago, the asteroid known as 2023 DZ2 will pass within 320,000 miles (515,000 kilometres) of the moon on Saturday and, several hours later, buzz the Indian Ocean at about 17,500 mph (28,000 kph).

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Tigers' T20 dominance continues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh continued their dominance in the shortest format as they registered a 22-run victory [via Duck Worth Lewis and Stern method] over Ireland in a rain-affected contest at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram on Monday.

After beating the world champions England 3-0 in T20Is at home earlier this month, Bangladesh now lead the three-match T20I series 1-0 against Ireland as the Tigers set the record for their best streak in the format with four wins on the trot.

Bangladesh posted 207 for five in 19.2 overs, their third highest total in T20Is, before rain halted play in the port city. It was also only the fourth time the Tigers crossed the 200-run mark in the shortest format.

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Rony Talukdar hit a blistering 38-ball 67, his first T20I fifty, and starred in a rapid 91-run opening stand with Liton Das to set the platform for Bangladesh's 207-run total in 19.2 overs during the first T20I against Ireland in Chattogram yesterday. The Tigers won the rain-affected contest by 22 runs (DLS).

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

RAHUL'S REMOVAL AS MP

Parliament adjourned after protests

AFP, New Delhi

India's parliament was adjourned twice yesterday after lawmakers held rowdy protests and threw paper at the Speaker following the expulsion from the house of top opposition figure Rahul Gandhi.

Gandhi lost his parliamentary seat on Friday after being convicted in a case that critics say shows how the rule of law is under threat in the world's largest democracy under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Speaker called off proceedings less than a minute after opposition MPs wearing black erupted in shouting, some of them throwing bits of paper at him.

"I want to run the House with dignity," Speaker Om Birla said. The session resumed several hours later only to be abandoned again after about 10 minutes as opposition MPs chanted anti-Modi slogans and waved "Democracy in danger" placards.

It was the latest in a string of stoppages in recent weeks in India's often raucous parliament among lawmakers representing India's 1.4 billion people.

Opposition MPs have been demanding a probe into potential links between Modi and the business empire of tycoon Gautam Adani, which has been hit by allegations of accounting fraud.

Debates have also descended into shouting matches

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