



DOHAZARI-COX'S BAZAR RAIL LINE

Asian elephants to face existential threat

Experts say only 1 overpass, 2 underpasses in 3 forests inadequate for their free movement

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

The new Dohazari-Cox's Bazar railway line, which cuts through three forested areas, is likely to obstruct the free movement of the critically endangered Asian elephants that use these forests as corridors.

Elephant specialists and forest officials say that corridors are vital to the existence of elephants that use them to move from one habitat to another in search of food and water. They believe that the overpass and underpasses built by Bangladesh Railway to facilitate the elephants' movement are inadequate and will pose a threat to their existence.

Out of the 102-kilometre rail line, 27 kilometres traverse through the Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary, the Fasiakhali Wildlife Sanctuary and the Medhakocopia National Park—three important habitats

for the Asian elephants in the Chattogram-Cox's Bazar region. These corridors were first documented in 2016 by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) during a survey on the number of elephants in the region.

The government de-reserved 276 acres of forest, felled 7,20,443 trees and cut portions of 26 hills in 2016 to facilitate the construction of the rail line, according to an inventory report prepared by the forest department.

The construction of the Dohazari-Cox's Bazar railway began in March 2018.

As part of the ongoing construction of the rail line, Bangladesh Railway has built one overpass and two underpasses, as suggested/prescribed by the project's funding partner, Asian Development Bank, according to sources with knowledge of

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An overpass being built for the Dohazari-Cox's Bazar railway, the ongoing construction of which cuts through three forest areas that also act as corridors for the endangered Asian elephant.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

BB alerts banks of malware risks

MAHMUDUL HASAN

Bangladesh Bank has recently alerted banks and non-bank financial institutions that they are at risk of cyberattacks and asked them to heighten their guard against malware and viruses.

Malware like the banking Trojan TrickBot -- which can steal financial details, account credentials and personally identifiable information -- are at large.

Subsequently, the BB in a letter on July 10 requested banks and NBFIs to deploy cybersecurity best practices such as regular patch updates of ICT systems, the use of licenced software and other solutions, regular

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2 cops 'tortured three people to extort money'

Victims say; cops deny allegations



Noman



Badrul

AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH, Savar

Two police officers in Savar have allegedly tortured three people and extorted money from them in three separate incidents.

One of the three men was allegedly tortured and extorted Tk 80,000, after he refused to meet the police officers' indecent demand for handing his daughter over to them.

Victim Arif Khan of Vadail area said Sub-inspector Noman Siddique and Assistant sub-inspector Badrul Huda of Ashulia Police Station detained him in the evening of May 28, when he was watching a cricket match at a nearby shop.

Police suddenly cuffed his hands, and took him to his house. They searched his house and found Tk 30,000, which they instantly pocketed. The cops then asked his wife and daughter to arrange another Tk 1 lakh for his release, forced him into a car and whisked him away.

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EU delegation sits with EC officials

Enquires about electoral laws

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A technical team of European Union Exploratory Mission during a meeting with Election Commission officials enquired about Bangladesh's election laws and the process of resolving electoral disputes.

The four member EU team, led by Dimitra Ioannou, held the meeting at the EC yesterday afternoon but did not make any statements for the media.

EC Joint Secretary Mahbubur Rahman Sarker after the meeting said that the EU team wanted to know about the electoral process, the constitution, and the Representation of the People Order, 1972.

He said the team enquired about the process of international observers coming to Bangladesh and monitoring the polls and how they could bring in necessary equipment.

The EU team came to Bangladesh on July 8 on a

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Russia strikes grain ports in Ukraine

Lifts navigation safety guarantees in Black Sea

REUTERS, Moscow

Russia struck Ukrainian ports yesterday, a day after pulling out of a UN-backed deal to let Kyiv export grain, and Moscow claimed gains on the ground in an area where Ukrainian officials said Russian forces were going back on the offensive.

Russia said it hit fuel storage in Odesa and a plant making seabornedrones there, as part of "mass revenge strikes" in retaliation for attacks by Ukraine that knocked out its road bridge to the occupied Crimean Peninsula.

Falling debris and blast waves damaged several homes and unspecified port infrastructure in one of Ukraine's main ports, Odesa. Local authorities in Mykolaiv, another port, described a serious fire there.

The Russian attacks on ports provide "further proof that the country-terrorist wants to endanger the lives of 400 million people in various countries that depend on Ukrainian food exports", said Andriy Yermak, the head of Ukraine's presidential staff.

Ukraine's air force said six Kalibr missiles and 31 out of 36 drones were shot down. Moscow, for its part, said it

had foiled a Ukrainian drone strike on Crimea.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin warned yesterday that attempts to ship grain from Ukrainian Black Sea ports without security guarantees from Russia would carry risks because Kyiv used those waters for military activities.

Turkey said its foreign minister, Hakan Fidan, had had a phone call with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov to discuss the grain issue.

Lavrov told Fidan that Russia's decision to quit the deal meant "the withdrawal" of navigation safety guarantees in the Black Sea and "the dissolution of the Joint Coordination Center in Istanbul," according to a statement.

Russia's claim to have advanced around Kupiansk was a rare sign of Moscow attempting go back on the offensive since Kyiv launched its counteroffensive last month.

Both sides have endured bitter losses in Europe's bloodiest combat since World War Two, yet front lines have moved only incrementally since last November, despite a massive Russian winter offensive followed by Ukraine's counterassault.

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2024 INDIA POLLS

Over two dozen opposition parties form alliance

REUTERS, New Delhi

More than two dozen Indian opposition parties said yesterday that they had joined hands to form an alliance called "INDIA" to take on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in parliamentary elections next year.

Naming the alliance INDIA is seen as an attempt by the opposition parties to challenge the BJP on its own nationalist platform in elections due by May 2024.

Mallikarjun Kharge, president of the main opposition Congress party, said INDIA stood for "Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance".

"The main aim is to stand together to safeguard democracy and the constitution," Kharge told reporters at the end of a two-day meeting of 26 opposition parties in the southern city of Bengaluru.

The Bengaluru meeting of opposition parties is their second in a month to sink differences and build a common platform ahead of next year's elections, which BJP remains the favourite to win.

The first meeting last month had 15 parties agreeing to unite against the BJP.

The parties, many of which are regional rivals and have been splintered at the national level, account for less than half the 301 seats BJP has in the 542-member lower house of parliament.

They have, however, sought to sink their differences to challenge the BJP after Congress party leader Rahul Gandhi was convicted in a defamation case and disqualified from parliament in March.

"From today, it's a real challenge," said Mamata Banerjee, chief minister of the eastern state of West Bengal and a key opposition leader. "Catch us if you can."

Tigresses eye historic series win

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After registering their maiden ODI win over India last Sunday, Bangladesh women's cricket team have their eyes set on yet another historic achievement as they hope to seal the three-match series with a win in the second ODI at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.

The match is scheduled to begin at 9:30 am, with the fans having the option to catch the action live on BCB's YouTube channel.

According to all-rounder Lata Mondal, the series win over a top side like India, who sit two places ahead of the Tigresses at four in the ODI rankings, will be a turning point for women's cricket in Bangladesh, who have only won ODI series against Pakistan, Zimbabwe and Ireland.

"Obviously, it will be a [turning point if we win the series]. We really work hard and have been waiting for a good result for a long time. So, if we can do well on the field then the result will be in our favour. Who doesn't want to win the series as we will try to play our best cricket and follow

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TEESTA RUNS AMOK

An elderly woman weeps while looking at her home and land destroyed by erosion in the Teesta at Rajpur village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila. Inset, the erosion has already destroyed many 75 homesteads, 150 bighas of arable land and four fruit orchards. While many locals have moved themselves and their belongings to safety, it was much too late for the others to save their assets. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY



Scientists invent self-healing solar panels with 'miracle material'

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have invented a next-generation solar panel capable of healing itself when damaged in space.

The breakthrough technology makes use of the so-called "miracle material" perovskite, which has previously been used to significantly increase the efficiency of standard silicon solar cells.

A team based at the University of Sydney in Australia discovered that the material's remarkable properties allow solar panels in low-Earth orbit that are damaged by radiation to recover 100 percent of their original efficiency by using the Sun.

Satellites have used solar panels to deliver electric power since the 1950s, however they have suffered from degradation rates of up to 10 percent efficiency loss per year as a result of various types of radiation.

In order to combat this, the scientists tested a new design using a microprobe to mimic the proton radiation exposure that solar cells undergo while orbiting the Earth for tens to hundreds of years.

They discovered that degradation caused by this type of radiation could be reversed in perovskite solar cells by using heat treatment in vacuum.