



Runway in the sea to be active by December

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The country's longest runway, at the Cox's Bazar Airport, is expected to be ready for use by December this year.

The expansion work of the runway that runs into the sea will be completed by then, ahead of schedule.

This will be the first such runway, sometimes touted maritime runway, in the country built on land reclaimed from the Bay of Bengal.

Once in service, large aircraft like Boeing 777s and Boeing 747s would be able to land at the airport, said officials of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB).

Meanwhile, CAAB has started the process to hire consultants for drawing detail design to turn the airport into a regional aviation hub with necessary facilities.

It is implementing the project hiring a Chinese joint venture firm -- China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) and China's Changjiang Yichang Waterway Engineering Bureau (CYWEB).

"Our target is to finish the project by the timeline. By this year, we hope to complete the major scope of the work, including the runway, and hand it over to the authorities," Li Guangqi, the site manager of CCECC, told this correspondent on July 14.

Despite the challenges, including the Covid-19 and the Russia-Ukraine war, the project saw 77 percent progress so far, he said, adding, "We are ahead of schedule."

The rest of the work will be done by the deadline of May 10 next year.

The Cox's Bazar Airport started its journey as a domestic airport in 1956. Four airlines now operate

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An aerial shot of the expansion work on Cox's Bazar Airport's runway that runs into the sea. It is expected to open by December this year. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF CCECC

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'ATTEMPT TO SNATCH ACCUSED' Man killed in 'police firing', 12 injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

A suspected drug dealer was shot dead and 12 others, including a child, were injured during what police said was a confrontation between law enforcement and a group of people who were trying to snatch a suspect from police custody early yesterday.

Deceased Ayub Noor Bhuiyan, 55, of Bijoynagar upazila in Brahmanbaria, was an accused in five narcotics cases, said police.

Speaking to this newspaper, Brahmanbaria Superintendent of Police Mohammad Shakhawat Hossain said Sub-Inspector Saidul led a police team to Adampur village in the upazila to arrest Ayub's son Arif Bhuiyan, 30, around 3:30am.

There was an arrest warrant against Arif, who is also accused in five

ATTACK ON HERO ALOM

Police arrest two 'culprits'

Obaidul Quader terms the incident unacceptable



Manik

Al Amin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested two more suspects in connection with the attack on Ashraful Hossain Alom alias Hero Alom, an independent candidate in the Dhaka-17 by-polls.

They were arrested in the capital's Tejgaon area on Wednesday night, Mostafizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Banani Police Station, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The two arrestees are Manik Gazi, 22, and Al Amin, 25.

They were among the main attackers. CCTV footage shows that during the attack, Manik held Alom around the waist from behind while Al Amin beat him up, said Mostafizur.

At least 15 people are involved in the attack and drives are underway to arrest the rest, the OC added.

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Russia causing global food crisis

Says EU; Moscow hits Odesa for 3rd night, threatens ships in Black Sea

REUTERS

Russia is responsible for a major global food supply crisis, the European Union's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, said yesterday, some days after the Kremlin announced it would suspend an agreement for Ukrainian grain exports through the Black Sea.

"What we already know is that this is going to create a big and huge food crisis in the world...," Borrell told journalists before heading into a EU foreign ministers' meeting.

Borrell also accused Russia of deliberately attacking grain storage facilities in the southern port city of Odesa, which he said would further deepen the food crisis.

Meanwhile, three people were killed and a Chinese consular building was damaged yesterday in a third successive night of air strikes on southern Ukrainian port cities, Ukrainian officials said.

Russia also issued a threat against Ukraine-bound vessels in the Black Sea. The United States said Russia's warning to ships indicated Moscow might attack vessels at sea. The signals that Russia was willing to use force to reimpose its blockade of one of the world's biggest food exporters set global prices soaring.

Moscow says it will not participate in

the year-old grain deal without better terms for its own food and fertiliser sales. The United Nations says Russia's decision threatens food security for the world's poorest people.

Beijing, a Russian ally, did not immediately comment on the incident of damage to Chinese consular building.

"Russian terrorists continue their attempts to destroy the life of our country," Zelenskiy said on the Telegram messaging app. "Together we will make it through this terrible time. And we will withstand the attacks of Russian evil."

In Odesa, a security guard was killed and at least eight other people were hurt, including a child, Kiper said.

A married couple was killed in the city of Mykolaiv, mayor Oleksandr Senkevych said.

Elsewhere, on the front line near Kupiansk, a railway hub Ukraine recaptured last month, Stanislav, an artillery unit commander, said his forces had received newly issued cluster munitions, and could start firing them soon: "Maybe today or tomorrow."

The Kremlin said yesterday that Poland's decision to bolster its forces along its border with Belarus in response to the presence of Russian Wagner mercenary fighters was "a cause for concern".

POLLS-TIME GOVT UK envoy holds talks with AL, BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Sarah Cooke held separate meetings with the ruling Awami League and opposition BNP yesterday when both the parties reiterated their stance on the election-time government.

BNP wants the polls to be held under a non-party election-time administration, while the AL says the election will be held under the current government in line with the constitution.

The British diplomat did not make any comments on the talks, but AL and BNP leaders told reporters after the meetings that they made their position clear during their discussion with the High Commissioner.

Sarah Cooke met Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader at the Setu Bhaban in the capital's Mohakhali and discussed the 12th parliamentary elections, due in about six months.

She also inquired about the attack on Hero Alom, who ran as an independent candidate in Dhaka 17 constituency by-election on July 17.

"She [the British envoy] wanted to know whether the next election will be free, fair and peaceful. The British High Commissioner also sought to know whether it would be participatory... As

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GONO ODHIKAR PARISHAD Nur faction evicted from its office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A faction of Gono Odhikar Parishad led by Nurul Haque Nur tried to enter the party office by breaking the padlock yesterday but they were obstructed by police.

Nur, who was recently elected president of the party, alleged that police charged truncheons on party leaders and activists to evict them from the building.

He also alleged that Col (ret'd) Mia Moshuazzaman, owner of Pritom Zaman Tower that houses the office, prevented them from entering the office as per the instruction of the government.

Moshuazzaman, also a former joint convener of the party and a supporter of the other faction led by Reza Kibria, said he locked the office because of "criminal activities" of the Nur faction.

Nur said since Moshuazzaman was the building owner and a party leader, he let them use the place as the party office for free. "We had signed a contract with him. In the contract, it was said that we'll be given a notice six months before we are to vacate the place," he said on Facebook live.

But without any notice, Moshuazzaman disconnected electricity a couple of days ago and locked the office, he said.

Contacted, Moshuazzaman said he got several noise complaints from neighbours against Nur and his supporters.

"Besides, he came to know from the media that Nur has communications with controversial persons. For this, I gave him a notice on July 7 to vacate my place."

"Instead of leaving the place, Nur made statements against me on several occasions... He didn't pay rent for

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POWER SECTOR Adviser of IMED report suspended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Public Administration has suspended Additional Secretary SM Hamidul Haque who was an adviser to a much-talked-about IMED report on power sector.

Hamidul was the director general of sector-1 of the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division.

His suspension comes two days after one of the authors of the report -- Deputy Secretary Mohammad Mahidur Rahman -- was suspended.

Hamidul was made an Officer on Special Duty (OSD) on Sunday and Mahidur on Monday. OSD is considered a punishment post.

The report, which was uploaded on the IMED website on May 25, called the practice of paying capacity charges to power

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FLUTTERING FISH ... Around 15-20 feet deep in the Saint Martin's Island, these Eight-banded butterfly fish were spotted foraging for food -- coral polyps. Popular marine corallivores, butterfly fish have around 129 species and are found mostly on the reefs of the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific oceans. What is fascinating about the Eight-banded butterfly fish is that its background colour depends on the environment inhabited by it -- paler colour in clear waters and yellower in less clear water. The fish tend to stay in groups and if one is found travelling alone, it's believed to be in search of a mate. Butterfly fish are one of the very few fish species who find a mate, and then hunt, live and travel together for life. While many people may prefer having these fish in their aquariums, it's difficult to help them survive as they almost exclusively feed on coral polyps and may starve to death without them.

PHOTO: SHARIF SARWAR

Central American ex-presidents, MPs added to US graft list

REUTERS

The US State Department added nearly 40 people from El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua, including former presidents and judges, to a list published on Wednesday of "corrupt and undemocratic actors."

Two former Salvadoran presidents - Mauricio Funes, who served from 2009 to 2014, and his successor Salvador Sanchez, whom Washington links to corruption, money laundering and embezzlement of public funds - were added to the list.

Funes and Sanchez, who both faced legal proceedings in El Salvador, now live in Nicaragua and cannot be extradited after receiving citizenship from the government of President Daniel Ortega.

"Corruption, a root cause of irregular migration, harms our national security," said Brian Nichols, assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs, as he presented the report.

Guatemalan targets include Fredy Orellana, the judge who ordered the suspension of an anti-graft party after its presidential candidate, Bernardo Arevalo, garnered enough votes to take part in an August 20 presidential run-off.

The so-called Engel list also features judges and prosecutors accused of persecuting journalists in Guatemala.

Guatemala's government meanwhile rejected the accusations on Wednesday, labeling the report "used by the United States to impose its jurisdiction on people abroad, as despicable."