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(From right, clockwise) The present state of the iconic Northbrook Hall, popularly known as Lalkuthi; the expected look of the heritage building after the completion of renovation work. Once completed, the site will be transformed into a modern community centre with amenities fit for the urban population.



PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS, COLLECTED

DENGUE OUTBREAK

Cases keep rising outside Dhaka

Ctg, Laxmipur, Pirojpur top list; 14 more die across country

HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

The rate of dengue infection keeps rising outside the capital with Chattogram standing top in terms of the number of patients hospitalised after being infected by the mosquito borne disease.

From January till yesterday, 4,616 dengue cases were reported in Chattogram, the highest among all districts except Dhaka, according to the data of the Directorate General of Health Services. Chattogram is followed by Laxmipur and Pirojpur with 2,693 and 2,587 cases registered respectively so far.

Since the last part of July, according to DGHS data, the number of dengue cases outside Dhaka started to outweigh the capital, which is still continuing.

Over 1.38 lakh cases were reported in the country as of yesterday. Of them, 74,749 cases were recorded outside Dhaka.

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Lalkuthi set for a facelift

DSCC's renovation initiative underway

DIPAN NANDY

Crumbling ceilings, damp walls, thick dust on the floor, and a deafening silence – this is what visitors are welcomed with when they first step into the iconic Northbrook Hall, popularly known as Lalkuthi.

However, the dilapidated heritage site is set to be renovated through an effort led by Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC).

But this time, the archeological heritage site will be transformed into a modern community centre with amenities fit for the urban population.

The DSCC has initiated a project under the Dhaka City Neighbourhood Upgrading Project (DCNUP), which aims to renovate public spaces and enhance urban services across four neighbourhoods in Dhaka south, benefiting an estimated one million residents.

Funded by the World Bank, DCNUP, with a budget of over US \$100 million, comes as a boon for the architectural masterpiece, located on the banks of the



Originally built as a Town Hall, this masterpiece, showcasing a blend of Mughal and European architecture, was inaugurated in 1880 by the then-viceroy Thomas George Baring.

Buriganga.

Originally built as a Town Hall, this masterpiece, showcasing a blend of Mughal and European architecture, was named after Lord Northbrook, Viceroy of India (1872-1876). It was inaugurated in 1880 by the then-viceroy Thomas George Baring.

Later, the building's bright red brick construction led to it being called "Lalkuthi". It served as a popular hub

for the capital's aristocrats and affluent individuals.

In 1882, a public library was added on the southeast side of the hall. The library, later named Johnson Hall, was inaugurated in 1887 with a collection of 1,000 books, many of which were destroyed during the 1971 Liberation War.

On February 7, 1926, Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore was given a grand reception in the hall by Dhaka

Municipality and People's Association.

The hall was also used as the telegram office during the 1950s and later as Central Women's College before it was handed over to Dhaka Municipality Corporation. The hall is now under the jurisdiction of DSCC.

While a complete restoration might prove to be challenging, DSCC is determined to infuse modern vitality into this cultural heritage. Their plans include creating contemporary amenities like community centres and libraries for both locals and visitors.

After renovation, Lalkuthi will have a town hall, exhibition gallery, banquet hall, seminar hall, and space for events and photography. The planned Lalkuthi community centre, to be built by the hall, will provide essential facilities, extended semi-outdoor spaces, and a coffee shop.

After the transformation, Lalkuthi will have a public library, digital archive, book cafe, and souvenir booth, with corridors that could be used as exhibition spaces. Outdoor areas will feature civic events,

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Country celebrates a colourful Janmashtami



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People from all walks of life came together yesterday in a vibrant display of unity in celebrating Janmashtami, the birthday of Lord Sree Krishna, a revered deity in Hinduism.

The historic Janmashtami procession commenced at the Palashi intersection yesterday afternoon, continuing a tradition spanning over 450 years.

This procession, a testament to the diverse and inclusive nature of Bangladesh, attracted participants from various religious communities, and made its way through the important streets

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CHOTU'S DAY OUT... Tuhin, an HSC student currently residing in Dhaka College hall, lets his feline friend ride on his shoulder on their way to Bangladesh Poshu Hospital. Affectionately named Chotu, the kitten has been suffering from fever. The photo was taken yesterday near Dhaka Medical College.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

BNP wants to play 'evil game': Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said BNP wants to play an "evil game" by using the issue of Prof Muhammad Yunus after failing to wage movements.

"Before the last parliamentary election, BNP played the same 'evil game' with Dr Kamal Hossain. This time, they came with Dr Yunus. They want to create an unstable situation like that of 1/11," he said.

The Awami League general secretary was talking as the chief guest at a rally held on occasion of Janmashtami at Palashi intersection.



DHAKA-MAWA EXPRESSWAY

3 killed as bus hits stationary truck

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Three people were killed and 12 injured when a bus rammed into a stationary truck on the Dhaka-Mawa expressway in Munshiganj early yesterday.

The accident took place in Ramerkhola area of Sirajdikhan upazila around 4:00am.

One of the deceased was identified as Hasina Begum, confirmed Kanchan Kumar Singh, OC of Hasara Highway Police Station.

Police and witnesses said the driver of a Dhaka-bound truck pulled over on the expressway after one of its wheels got damaged. After sometime, a bus of Labiba Paribahan hit the truck from behind, leaving the three dead on the spot.

Srinagar fire service Inspector Mahfuz Riben said that three fire engines from Srinagar Fire Station and Sirajdikhan Fire Station rushed to the scene after receiving information about the accident.

Seven of the injured were sent to Srinagar and Sirajdikhan upazila health complexes, Mahfuz said.

MAWA-BHANGA

Test run of special train today

BSS, Dhaka

The Bangladesh Railway is going to start trial run of a special train on Mawa-Bhanga section crossing through the Padma Bridge today.

The train will start its journey from Kamalapur Railway Station at 8:45am and will reach Bhanga at 11:54am, senior information officer of the Railways Ministry Shiraj ud Doula Khan told BSS.

Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan, Secretary of the Ministry of Railways Dr Mohammad Humayun Kabir and other officials will be on board.

"We hope the trial run of the special train will be done on Thursday from Mawa to Bhanga through Padma Multipurpose Bridge," Afzal Hossain, Project Director of the Padma Bridge Rail Link Project told BSS.

He said a test run of a train of the Padma Bridge rail link between Faridpur's Bhanga and the Padma Bridge viaduct at Shariatpur was conducted earlier.

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PRAYER TIMING

SEPTEMBER 7

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:35	12:45	4:30	6:20	7:45
JAMAAT 5:10	1:15	4:45	6:25	8:15

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