



Road transport to get big push

PM to open 150 bridges, 14 overpasses Oct 19

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The country's road transport sector will get a big boost this week as 150 bridges and 14 overpasses under the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) network are set to open this Thursday.

Apart from these, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a programme will also inaugurate the constructions of two major bridges in Mymensingh to improve road connectivity of the area's land ports with the capital.

She will also launch the automated Vehicle Inspection Centre (VIC) in the capital's Mirpur; a newly constructed building of Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority in Tejgaon, and BRTC's bus depot and training centre in Mymensingh.

Hasina, at the same programme at the RHD headquarters in the capital's Tejgaon area, will inaugurate the compensation programme for road accident victims as well.

ROAD CAPACITY & SAFETY

On November 7 last year, Hasina opened 100 bridges under the RHD network – the largest number of bridges to be opened in a single day.

This time, she is set to open 150 bridges in 39 districts under eight divisions.

Of the bridges, 40 are in Mymensingh division, 32 in Dhaka, 27 in Chattogram, 22 in Rajshahi, 12 in Khulna, eight each in Barishal and Rangpur, and one in Sylhet.

Meanwhile, eight of the 14 overpasses are in Rajshahi division and six in Rangpur.

"Opening such a big number of bridges will increase the capacity and efficiency of the RHD road network while opening the overpasses on major highways will also improve road safety," RHD's Chief Engineer Syed Moinul Hasan told The Daily Star yesterday.

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RHD's Chief Engineer

The PM will inaugurate the constructions of Kewatkhali bridge and Rahmatpur bridge over the Brahmaputra in Mymensingh.

Kewatkhali bridge, set to be the largest steel-arch bridge in the country, will be constructed at a cost of Tk 3263.63 crore, while the 1471-metre Rahmatpur bridge will be constructed at a cost of Tk 358 crore.

Deadlines of both projects is June 2025.

VEHICLE FITNESS TEST

The VIC that Hasina will open on Thursday at the BRTA office in Mirpur will carry out automatic vehicle fitness tests. It will be able to test 500-600 vehicles per day.

The BRTA will, for the first time, give the task of checking motor vehicles' fitness to a private company.

Computer Network System Limited, which provides several services to the BRTA, is supposed to establish, operate and maintain the VIC for five years at a cost of Tk 105.23 crore.

It will provide training to 200 BRTA staffers.

Currently, the BRTA issues the vital clearance mostly manually. The only digital machine it has remains unfunctional.

COMPENSATION FOR ROAD SAFETY VICTIMS

The PM will provide Tk 7.08 crore as compensation to 162 road accident victims or their families after opening the compensation programme on Thursday.

"This is the first time that compensation is being given to road accident victims [under the Road Transport Act-2018] ... It is another humanitarian step taken by the government," BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder told this newspaper yesterday.

Families of 136 victims, who have died on the road, will get Tk 5 lakh each, while one seriously injured victim will get Tk 3 lakh and 25 other injured victims will get Tk 1 lakh each.

A trustee board, led by the BRTA chairman, finalised the list from 396 applications by victims seeking compensation. Some of the applications are still under scrutiny. Once verified, the victims will receive their due compensation.



The road in front of the BNP's central office in the capital's Nayapaltan is packed with Jubo Dal leaders, activists and supporters who flocked there to join a "youth rally" yesterday. Jubo Dal organised the rally as part of the BNP's one-point movement demanding resignation of the government and general election under a neutral non-party administration.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

BNP to face dire situation if it blockades the capital Warns Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday warned that if the BNP goes for blockade of the capital, the party would have to face dire consequences.

"If you [BNP activists] attempt to blockade the capital, you will be besieged. You are now entering Dhaka secretly; you will not find a way to escape. Did they [Hefajat activists] not flee Shapla Chattar at the dead of night? The BNP will have to suffer even more dire situations," said Quader.



He was addressing a "youth rally" organised by AL's youth body Jubo League in front of the AL headquarters in the capital protesting the "terror and anarchy of the BNP Jamaat".

The BNP might announce a Dhaka blockade programme at its tomorrow's rally, Quader said, "The BNP has started gathering their activists in Dhaka from across the country like they did in December

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BNP'S MOVEMENT Final phase to start soon Says Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said their party has no time to look back as they are going to initiate the final phase of their movement soon to topple the Awami League government.

Speaking at a rally of youth, he also called upon the BNP rank and file to make all-out preparations to make their movement a success by putting all their efforts and strength on the streets.

"Our only goal is to ensure the fall of the current regime and free our leader, Begum Khaleda Zia, for sending her abroad for treatment through an unstoppable movement," he said.

The BNP leader also said the mammoth rally of the youth wing of the BNP will help strengthen the ultimate movement of the opposition that will begin in the next few days after Durga Puja.

"We're fighting by risking our lives, as many of our brothers have sacrificed their lives and blood; many of our mothers and sisters have been tortured; many of our children have lost their fathers; and many of our mothers have lost their children. So, we have no time to look back," he observed.

Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal arranged the rally in front of BNP's Nayapaltan central office, demanding Khaleda's release and sending her abroad for advanced



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Artist makes ink from clone of Isaac Newton's apple tree

INDEPENDENT ONLINE



An artist has made ink from a clone of Sir Isaac Newton's apple tree that was blown down by Storm Eunice in Cambridge last year.

The fallen tree was a scion of the original apple tree which was said to have inspired Newton

to formulate his theory of gravity by watching an apple fall from it in the 1660s.

Planted at Cambridge University's Botanic Garden in 1954, the clone fell in high winds in February 2022.

The botanic garden's artist-in-residence Nabil Ali has extracted ink from its bark, and used it to create an artwork of 68 apples – to mark the age of the tree before it fell.

Newton's original tree, grown in the garden of his childhood home of Woolthorpe Manor near Grantham in Lincolnshire, was said to have fallen in a gale in the early half of the 19th century.

Four cops sued over ex-ACC official's death in custody

PBI tasked with probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The wife of a former Anti-Corruption Commission official, who died in police custody, filed a case against four police officials and five individuals accusing them of negligence and torture.



SM Shahidulla

Foujia Anwar, wife of deceased Sayed Mohammad Shahidulla, yesterday filed the case with Chattogram Metropolitan Session Judge's Court.

The four police personnel are Officer-in-Charge Khairul Islam of Chandgaon Police Station, Inspector (investigation) Mominur Rahman, and assistant sub-inspectors Md Younus and Sohel Rana.

The other five accused are SM Asaduzzaman, Jasim Uddin, Md Liton, Rony Akhter Tania, and Koli Akhter.

Judge Jebunnesa asked the Police Bureau of Investigation to investigate the

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The width of this road in Jatrabari has been reduced to less than half as road development work closes three lanes. Locals say the work has been going on for months. The usable lanes have gridlocks all day and the bustling wholesale kitchen market there aggravates the situation. The photo was taken around 8:00am yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

CUMILLA ATTACK 2 Jubo League activists held

Case filed against 400-500 unnamed people

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Some 400 to 500 unnamed people have been accused of attacking a procession of Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council in Cumilla city on Friday.

The attackers were carrying banners of Jubo League and Chhatra League, according to the statement of a case filed by Taposh Kumar Bakshi, general secretary of the council's Cumilla district unit.

Taposh lodged the case with Kotwali Model Police Station on Sunday night

Police early yesterday arrested two youths – Mohsin Ahmed Shipon, 35, and Nur Mohammad Sawpon, 40, – from the city's Town Hall area in connection with the attack, said Ahmed Sanjur Morshed, officer-in-charge of the police station.

A local court sent the two to jail in the afternoon after they were produced before it, the OC added.

The duo are activists of Cumilla city Jubo League, Abdullah Al Mahmud Shahid, convener of the unit, told The Daily Star.

According to the case statement,

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