



As the wind changes its course, farmers get busy with harvests in Haripur area of Narshingdi's Raipura union. Their faces beam with hope as they winnow the grain. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## PM to open Ctg expressway today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to inaugurate the port city's first elevated expressway today.

The premier will attend the inauguration programme virtually from Gono Bhaban, said Mahfuzur Rahman, project director.

However, the expressway will not be open to public yet.

"We are yet to fix the toll rates as our toll box construction has not started yet. The using-terms of the expressway also have not been developed," he said.

Asked when the route will be opened to public, Mahfuzur said a lot of work is left which will take months to complete.

The 16.5-kilometre expressway will ease the traffic congestion from the airport to Lalkhanbazar area. Commute between the two points currently takes 2-3 hours.

"This project will decrease the travel time to 30 minutes and it also intends to make commute to the southern part



of the district easy through Bangabandhu tunnel," he mentioned.

The expressway will be named after former city mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury.

Delwar Hossain Mazumdar, executive member of Forum for Planned Chittagong and former chairman of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, said opening the expressway without making it fit for vehicular movement was unnecessary.

However, once operational, it will play a vital role in the region, he said.

Chattogram Development Authority undertook the Tk 3,250 crore project in July 2017. Originally scheduled to be completed by June 2020, the project deadline was extended till June 2024, with the revised budget being Tk 4,298.95 crore.

Till date, the project work is 85 percent complete.

## Eleven killed in road accidents in six districts

STAR REPORT

At least 11 people were killed and seven injured in road accidents yesterday.

In Mymensingh, three persons were killed and two sustained injuries as a sand-laden truck hit a CNG-run auto-rickshaw at Kashiganj Bazar on Mymensingh-Netrokona road.

The deceased are auto-rickshaw driver Mustakim Mia, 30, and its passengers -- Lucky Akter, 30, and her sister Saki Akter, 17.

The injured -- Lucky's three-year-old daughter Humaira Akter, and Shaheen Khan -- are undergoing treatment at a hospital, said OC Abdullah Al Mamun of Tarakanda Police Station.

In Chattogram, two primary school students were killed and two others were injured in separate road accidents.

The deceased are Aynun Tasfi Toa, 9, and Nur Uddin, 13. Aynun Tasfi, a third grader of Suabil Islamia Government Primary School, was going to school around 9:00am with two other students on foot when a four-wheeler, locally called "chander gari", ran them over.

Meanwhile, Nur Uddin, a fifth-grader of Harala Government Primary School, died after a CNG-run auto-rickshaw ran him over in front of Barama College around 8:30am.

Md Jahangir, 32, driver of the auto-rickshaw, was detained, said police.

In Joypurhat, two people were killed in a collision between two motorcycles at Durgadah Bazar. The deceased are Jony Hossain, 35, and Samiul Islam, 27.

In Munshiganj, a father and his son were killed in a head-on collision between a CNG-run auto-rickshaw and a trolley in Torki area under Sadar upazila around 11:30am.

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## A medical college without campus

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Netrakona Medical College, which began its journey in 2019 with 50 students, has been failing to ensure sufficient teachers, classrooms, labs, and accommodation facilities for students over the last four years.

The college has been "temporarily" using rooms in Netrakona General Hospital since its inception. Simultaneously, 30 out of 75 teacher posts are vacant at present and there are no posts for a registrar or an assistant registrar to help guide students.

Among the 237 students currently enrolled, third and fourth year students are suffering the most, as their clinical classes are being hampered.

According to teachers, students need to take clinical classes in medicine, cardiology, paediatrics, thoracic surgery, ENT, ophthalmology, anaesthesia, and obstetrics, under the guidance of doctors in hospital wards, for the final one and a half year of their five-year programme.

Students in their final year are expected to complete their final exams by November next year, but have not been able to start their

clinical classes yet.

Classes are being held at the hospital as the 100-bed facility receives fewer patients due to its limited resources.

However, the lack of resources is significantly hampering academics,

clinical classes, students will not qualify as doctors," said Rafiqul Islam, assistant professor of orthosurgery department.

Prof Shyamal Kumar Paul, principal of the college, denied the criticism and said they had



as for a medical student, practical learnings are as important as theories, if not more.

Many students said the hospital does not have modern and upgraded facilities, which further adds to their woes.

"About 80 percent of medical education is practical, and without

introduced an "integrated teaching method" to support students.

"A 25-acre site in Sadar's Mauje Bali area has been selected for a permanent campus, and a proposal was sent to the ministry concerned in May this year. However, the proposal has not been approved yet," he added.

## Transparency vital for BRI success: experts

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chinese projects under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) need to follow the principles of transparency, good governance and peoples' participation, said economists and international relations analysts yesterday.

They said there are perceptions that BRI projects cause debt-trap and create opportunities for corruption. These perceptions -- wrong or right -- need to change for China to establish itself as a global power.

The observations came at a seminar titled "BRI and Bangladesh", organised by the Centre for Alternatives (CA) at a city hotel.

Three years after China launched BRI, Bangladesh became a signatory in 2016.

The global infrastructure development initiative connects Asia, Europe, Africa and Latin America. Since inception, China has helped build 12 highways, 21 bridges, and 27 power and energy projects in Bangladesh.

Chinese Foreign Direct Investment, which was only US \$19 million in 2009, stood at US \$1.3 billion in 2023.

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## Polls as per constitution Says Shahriar Alam

UNB, Dhaka

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam yesterday reiterated that the next general election will be held as per the constitution, regardless of "who's doing what."

He said election is an internal matter of the people of Bangladesh and it will be held as per the constitution and relevant laws.

The state minister for foreign affairs was talking to reporters at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Asked about the reported letters to three major political parties from the US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Donald Lu, he said the spokespersons of the concerned parties would know about this.

The Election Commission is taking preparations to hold the next national election by January first week and is likely to announce polls schedules soon.

Earlier in the day, Law Minister Anisul Huq conveyed to the UN Human Rights Council that the opposition party BNP's demand for holding the next national election under a caretaker government is "completely unconstitutional and illegal."

## EROSION IN LALMONIRHAT

# Dharla devours acres of croplands

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

"I have already lost 15 bighas of my arable land to erosion by Dharla river in the last few years."

Suresh Chandra Barman, a 68-year-old farmer of Bangram village of Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, is now spending sleepless nights yet again as his remaining five-bigha cultivable land remains under erosion threat.

Hundreds have lost their crop lands to the erosion in the past week.

"We will lose everything if steps are not taken urgently," said 67-year-old Champa Bewa of the same village who lost half a-bigha of arable land and six decimals of property to the erosion last week.

"Over the last 15 years, the river took my 10 bighas of cropland, leaving me destitute," she said.



About 150 bighas of arable land in Bangram has been devoured by the Dharla last week while several hundred bighas of land remain under threat. These lands are used to cultivate various crops including paddy and groundnuts, said Idris Ali, chairman of Kulaghat Union Parishad.

"We have contacted Water Development Board in Lalmonirhat to take steps, but no measure has been taken yet," he added.

Confirming the matter, Shunil Kumar, executive engineer of WDB in Lalmonirhat, said they have been unable to work in all erosion-hit areas due to a lack of fund.

"We are dumping sand-filled geo bags in the affected areas. The badly-affected Bangram area has been inspected and higher authorities have been informed about the issue," he added.

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