



## Govt plans to collect tolls on 4 highways

### Road ministry asks RHD to take steps

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Vehicles on four major national highways will have to pay tolls as the government looks to mobilise more funds for repair and maintenance work for the network of roads and highways.

The issue of collecting tolls from important national highways was discussed at the monthly coordination meeting of the Road Transport and Highways Division (RTHD), under the road transport and bridges ministry.

The meeting, held on January 30, decided that steps would be taken to collect tolls from the important highways, as per the minutes.

Subsequently, the RTHD has directed the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) to take necessary measures for collecting tolls from vehicles on "important highways",



The Daily Star has learnt from officials informed with the proceedings.

In the first phase, the Dhaka-Chattoogram, the Dhaka-Rangpur, the Dhaka-Sylhet and the Sylhet-Tamabil highways have been shortlisted for toll collection, they said.

Tolls have to be collected from the highways for their maintenance, said ABM Amin Ullah Nuri, secretary of the division who presided over the meeting.

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## LIVING ON THE EDGE

This particular building was half demolished when the BIWTA conducted a raid against illegal establishments on the Dhaleshwari in Kuchiamara of Keraniganj last year. However, as the rest of it was left untouched, locals began living there despite the risks involved. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



## Pick projects with quick returns

### PM asks top bureaucrats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday tasked top bureaucrats with selecting projects that benefit the people and provide immediate returns, and to ensure the quick utilisation of foreign loans.

Chairing the first Ecneec meeting with the newly elected government, the PM also gave directives to ensure necessary funds to speed up the projects which are near completion.



Planning Division Senior Secretary Satyajit Karmakar told reporters after the meeting.

He added that the Cabinet secretary

The meeting was held at the National Economic Council's conference room in planning commission in the capital.

"The Cabinet secretary was given the special task to identify projects for the welfare of the people considering the socio-economic development

## FIGHTING IN MYANMAR

### Balukhali rocked by sounds of gunshots, blasts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The people of Balukhali in Tekna's Whykong woke up to the sounds of gunfire and explosions early yesterday.

Sirajul Mostafa, a member of Whykong Union Parishad, said people living near the border are now in panic again due to the fresh round of what appeared to be intense fighting in Myanmar.

He said the sounds were heard between 7:00am and 10:00am.

Locals said over the past four to five days, they heard sporadic gunshots across the border. Those were nothing like what happened yesterday morning, they said.

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CELEBRATING LOVE AND JOY ... A boy helps a girl fix her floral bracelet on the eve of Pahela Falgun and Valentine's Day.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## 308 rivers lost navigability

### Shipping minister tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 308 rivers in Bangladesh have lost their navigability while 931 are flowing as normal, Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, the state minister for shipping, told the parliament yesterday.

Of the rivers that have lost navigability, 85 are in Dhaka division, 71 in Rangpur, 18 in Rajshahi, 11 in Chattogram, 10 in Sylhet, 26 in Mymensingh and 87 in Khulna, he said in his scripted answer to a question from ruling Awami League MP, M. Abdul Latif from Chattogram-11.

In Dhaka division's Gazipur, Turag, Banar and Brahmaputra rivers don't have navigability, Chowdhury said based on the information received from the district administration and Bangladesh Water Development Board (WDB).

The 33 rivers of the Kishorganj district under the Dhaka division that have lost navigability are: Ghorautra, Dhaleswari, Cherapur, Haturia, Jhinuk, Narsunda, Betai, Singua, Old Brahmaputra, Surma, Dhanu, Kalni, Old Dhaleswari, Chinai, Ujan Dhanu, Bolakut, Boubatalai, Katiyarkona, Ghuchirdahy, Boulai,

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## Nawaz nominates Shehbaz for PM

### PML-N, PPP agree to form new Pak govt

AGENCIES

The two major Pakistan parties that joined forces to oust Imran Khan as prime minister in 2022 said yesterday they would form a new coalition to rule the country, after an election last week failed to produce a decisive winner.

At a joint press conference, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) said they would join with smaller parties to form the next government.

"The parties present here are almost two-thirds of the house that has been elected," said PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif, alongside leaders of the PPP and two other groups.

PML-N Information Secretary Marriyum Aurangzeb said that party supremo Nawaz Sharif has nominated Shehbaz Sharif for the post of the country's prime minister, reports Dawn online.

She added that PML-N Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz was nominated for the post of Punjab's chief minister.

However, Shehbaz Sharif, 72, would likely lead a government like the one he headed after Imran Khan was voted out of power in April 2022.

Shehbaz Sharif along with Asif Ali Zardari of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui of Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) met at the residence of Shujaat Hussain of Pakistan Muslim League Quaid (PML-Q) after a consultative meeting yesterday.

"Today we have united to tell the nation that we all accept the split mandate. I am thankful to Zardari and Bilawal that they decided for their party to vote for the PML-N," he said and thanked the other



Shehbaz Sharif

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