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Your Gateway to Afghanistan & the Region

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Ghazni Attack: '31 Killed, 24 Wounded'

At least 31 security personnel were killed in a suicide bombing in southern Ghazni province on Sunday morning.

Twenty-four police personnel were wounded in the attack on the army base involving a Humvee vehicle, which was detonated close to a Public Protection Unit in the provincial capital.

Ghazni Civil Hospital Director Baz Mohammad Himmat confirmed receiving 26 bodies and 17 wounded security force members.

But Zahir Shah Nikmal, spokesman of the public health department, said: "Some 31 killed and 24 wounded were admitted to the main hospital in Ghazni City following the attack.

The governor's spokesman Wahidullah Jumazada also confirmed the attack, for which no group or individual has so far claimed responsibility.

A security official, who did not want to be named, said the bomber ...



Iran Expresses Readiness to Send 20,000 Afghan **Prisoners to Afghanistan**

The Ministry of Justice has announced that Bahador Aminian, Iran's ambassador to Kabul, during a meeting with Justice Minister Fazl Ahmad Manavi, said that about 20,000 Afghan prisoners are being held in the country's prisons and that the Iranian government is ready to send them to Afghanistan.

The Iranian ambassador added that the files of 2,600 Afghan prisoners in Iranian prisons have been completed and are ready to be transferred to Afghanistan. During the meeting, he called on Afghanistan to pay attention to the transfer of 25 Iranian prisoners to the Iranian government.

The Ministry of Justice added that efforts are being made to find a logical solution to the problem of Afghan refugees in Iran and the transfer of Afghan prisoners from that country.

Manawi stressed that he is working to strengthen and implement the agreement on extradition of criminals between Afghanistan and Iran.

Framework for peace talks yet to be finalized



The Taliban's spokesman in Doha, Mohammad Naeem, says that negotiators from both sides on November 15 agreed on procedural rules with 21 items for the intra-Afghan talks and it was read out in Pashto and Dari & a copy was delivered to the host nation.

"The procedure of Intra-Afghan

negotiations between negotiating teams was completed and finalized in 21 articles on the 15th of November 2020," tweeted Mohammad Naeem, a spokesman for the Taliban

Sources this week reported a breakthrough in the talks and said both sides have agreed to include the US-Taliban agreement, UN endorsements for the Afghan peace process, commitments of the negotiating teams and the will of the Afghan people as the base for upcoming negotiations.

But the Presidential Palace on Wednesday denied that progress had been made in the peace talks between negotiators of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban, and said the deadlock

Sources this week said that Afghan chief negotiator Mohammad Massoom Stanikzai and presidential peace adviser Salam Rahimi have been on a secret trip to Kabul over the past three days, seeking President Ghani's approval for the agreed formulation.

The peace negotiations between teams from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban started on September 12; however, to date no direct talks have started because of disagreements on procedural rules for the negotiations.

Violence continues and appears to be escalating since the talks began. The Taliban has staged attacks on the centers of at least 50 districts in 16 provinces of the country following the signing of the peace deal with the US in Doha in February, and most of these attacks happened in the last two months after the start of the negotiations in Qatar on September 12, sources from various provinces ...

CNPA, AAF Seize 8,000kg of Narcotic **Drugs in Logar Province**

The Counter Narcotic Police of Afghanistan (CNPA) in a joint operation with Afghan Air Forces (AAF) has seized a huge number of drugs on Sunday, said the Ministry of Interior Affairs in a statement.

According to the statement, the Afghan forces discover and seized at least 8,000 kilograms of drugs in Dara-e-Ghoran of Khoshi district in the province.

"Afghan Counter-Narcotics Special Operation Police backed by ...



OIC called on the Taliban to agree an immediate ceasefire

Kabul has hailed the OIC pledge to stand by the people and government of Afghanistan with its resolutions on the situation in the country.

The Islamic bloc slammed the crimes of Daesh while welcoming regional initiatives in support of Afghanistan, adopted during the 47th meeting of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers on the 27th and 28th of November in the Niamey.

In a statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the OIC called on ulema and religious institutions across member states to declare the war against the Muslim state and people of Afghanistan illegitimate and call for support for peace talks. Reflecting collective support of Islamic states, the resolutions explicitly welcomed the start of the Afghan peace talks and commended Kabul's goodwill gesture of releasing the Taliban prisoners.

Condemning recent terrorist attacks



in Afghanistan, particularly those targeting civilians in Bamyan, Kabul University, Kosar training centre and the maternity hospital, the OIC called on the Taliban to reduce violence and agree to an immediate ceasefire.

As an institution, the OIC reiterated its full support and commitment to the Afghan peace talks and asked the international community to do the same.

It specifically asked states to support an Afghan-owned inclusive peace processto reach a political solution based on the renunciation of violence, cutting ties with terrorist groups, preservation of Afghanistan's democratic, political and socio-economic and development achievements of the past 19 years and respect of the Afghan constitution.

The OIC restated its support ... P3

Ghazni Attack:...

detonated an amoured vehicle full of explosives.

Afghan National Army (ANA) commandos were also based at the compound, local officials said.

Nasir Ahmad Faqiri, a member of the Ghazni provincial council, verified the casualties among the security personnel.

CNPA, AAF...

AAF conducted a joint operation in Dara-e-Ghoran area, Khoshi district of Logar," said the MoIA in a tweet.

Officials did not provide further details but said the narcotic drugs were all torched after discovering it during the operation.

"As a result, 8,000kg of illicit drugs seized & torched in the area," the tweet added.

No group or individual has been comprehended on charges with drug trafficking.

France: 62 police...

claim 500,000 took to streets throughout France, reporting 200,000 demonstrators in the capital Paris alone.

The StopLawSecurityGlobal coordination, which includes journalists' unions and human rights groups, also denounced violent scenes that it said took place in Paris and Lyon after the end of the demonstration. The protests came after video images of three police officers beating a black music producer inside his studio in Paris went viral this week, causing an outcry that saw politicians, footballers and millions of social media users express their disgust.

Scott Morrison and Angus Campbell at odds over Afghanistan war crimes report recommendation

It's not often we see the Prime Minister and the Chief of Defence at odds, but the Brereton Report detailing allegations of Australian war crimes in Afghanistan has exposed a public rift between the two and it's already pretty clear who will win the argument.

General Angus Campbell won mostly praise for his handling of this bombshell report released 10 days ago. As Chief of Army, he was the one who commissioned the inquiry four years ago and now as Defence Chief, General Campbell accepted the findings and recommendations with the seriousness and gravity they deserved.

In one of the darkest moments for the Australian Defence Force, the General is seen by both sides of politics to have responded well.

Mostly, anyway.

Then came the reaction

On one matter, there was immediate controversy: the decision to strip a group citation for the special forces in Afghanistan. It was hardly the most significant recommendation of the report; a unit citation is not a war medal and stripping it is hardly akin to what might be in store for those who committed war crimes.

But it was by far the most sensitive recommendation, given the number of troops affected and the signal sent to the broader veteran community.

When he released the report, General Campbell was

"I have accepted the Inspector-General's recommendation," he said in his opening remarks to a nationally televised press conference, "and will again write to the Governor-General, requesting he revoke the Meritorious Unit Citation awarded to Special Operations Task Group rotations serving in Afghanistan between 2007 and 2013."

It was presented as a final decision. The Chief of Defence had spoken. No ifs, no buts. A deployment marred by 39 alleged war crimes could hardly be considered "meritorious" any longer. The group citation was being revoked.

Then came the reaction, from the public, the veteran's community and inevitably, the politicians. Some of those who served honourably in Afghanistan and did nothing wrong wondered why they were being punished. The furious father of one commando killed in action said the citation would have to be collected



"from his gravestone".

An online petition to "save" the unit citation received more than 40,000 signatures at last count.

Labor MP Luke Gosling, himself a former commando, suggested it would be "cruel" to strip the honour from 3,000 personnel, the overwhelming majority of whom served with distinction.

Within the Government, a similar view formed.

'Decisions haven't been made yet'

While the citation may not have been issued to the special forces if we knew then what we know now about events in Afghanistan, most agreed the idea of revoking it was crazy and at the end of the day, impossible to implement.

Veterans Affairs Minister Darren Chester, who initially supported the CDF's decision, noted calls to the Open Arms support line for veterans had doubled in the space of a week.

The Prime Minister was asked by Ben Fordham on 2GB why thousands were being punished for the "sins of a couple of dozen".

His response made it clear he was uncomfortable with General Campbell's position.

"Decisions haven't been made yet on these things", he suggested, "so let's see how each step unfolds". Morrison went on to say he was "very sensitive to the issues ... as is the Defence Minister".

It's worth a reminder at this point that both the Prime Minister and Defence Minister were happy to leave the initial response to the damning war crimes report to General Campbell.

They took the view it was better for Defence to be seen to be dealing with its own mess and fixing internal problems.

Neither Morrison nor Linda Reynolds have even seen the unredacted version of the Brereton Report.

As Morrison said on Friday: "We haven't seen, nor do we wish to have provided to us, the detailed report, which includes the names of individuals. That, we think, would compromise the process. That is something for the ADF to address internally."

Ultimately, someone must decide

The unredacted version of the report contains more than just names. It includes, among other things, details of the alleged atrocities.

The Chief of Defence has read this full version, the Prime Minister has not. And yet it's the Prime Minister who's now overriding the CDF.

Morrison has a finely tuned political radar and could well be right in detecting where community sentiment lies on this issue.

Nonetheless, he's put General Campbell in an awkward position by suggesting it's still up in the air.

On Friday, the Chief of Army, Rick Burr, stood by General Campbell's position.

"I support the recommendation in the [Brereton] report," he said, "which is that if we knew then what we know now, the unit would not have been ... <u>P3</u>

By Kathy Kelly

Like A Rocket in The Garden: The Unending War in Afghanistan

Late last week, I learned from young Afghan Peace Volunteer friends in Kabul that an insurgent group firing rockets into the city center hit the home of one volunteer's relatives. Everyone inside was killed. Today, word arrived of two bomb blasts in the marketplace city of Bamiyan, in central Afghanistan, killing at least fourteen people and wounding forty-five.

These explosions have come on the heels of other recent attacks targeting civilians. On November 2, at least nineteen people were killed and at least twenty-two wounded by gunmen opening fire at Kabul University. On October 24, at least two dozen students died, and more than 100 were wounded in an attack on a tutoring center.

"The situation in our country is very bad and scary," one young Afghan friend wrote to me. "We are all worried." I imagine that's an understatement.

A new report released by

Save the Children, regarding violations against children in war zones, says Afghanistan accounts for the most killing and maiming violations, with 874 children killed and 2,275 children maimed in 2019.

Since the United Nations started collecting this data in 2005, more than 26,000 Afghan children have died.

Under President Donald Trump, the United States signed a "peace" deal with the Taliban in February 2020. It pertains to troop withdrawal and a Taliban pledge to cut ties with Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. The agreement certainly hasn't contributed toward a more peaceful life for Afghans, and a U.N. report indicates the Taliban has continued its ties with insurgent groups.

Now, Afghans face constant battles between insurgent groups, U.S. forces, Afghan government forces, NATO forces, various powerful Afghan warlords, and paramilitaries organized by ruthless mafias which control much of the drug industry and other profitable enterprises.

Under President Biden, the United States would likely abide by Trump's recent troop withdrawals, maintaining a troop presence of about 2,000. But Biden has indicated a preference for intensified Special Operations, surveillance and drone attacks. These strategies could cause the Taliban to nullify their agreement, prolonging the war through yet another presidency.

Mujib Mashal, a correspondent for The New York Times, was born in Kabul. When he was interviewed recently by one of his colleagues, he recalled being a little boy in the early 1990s, living through a civil war in Kabul, when rockets constantly bombarded his neighborhood.

Taliban groups were fighting various mujahideen. Mujib's father cultivated a vegetable garden outside their... P3

Afghanistan Condemn Iran's New Migrant Plan



Afghanistan has condemned an Iranian plan to impose 25-year jail terms on anyone deemed an "illegal migrant" while also giving officials authority to fire on vehicles suspected of carrying asylum seekers.

If approved by Iran's parliament, the move could affect nearly 2.5 million Afghans who have fled their homeland since the start of the conflict over four decades ago and are now living in Iran.

"We are highly concerned about this. We hope that Iran will not resort to such a move," Abdul Basit Ansari, an adviser for Afghanistan's ministry of refugees, told Arab News.

"We can jointly work to solve this issue, and we insist on voluntary repatriation of Afghans," he added.

Iran's Sharq newspaper, citing the country's Islamic Council, said recently that the parliament was working to "regulate illegal migrants" and would put its proposals up for approval "very soon." Under the plan those entering or living in Iran without a permit will be jailed for 25 years, and will face hefty fines and confiscation of property.

76.9

91

100.9

479

20.8

1030

91.1

101

480

20.9

1040

Exchange Rates

Trade Barriers Challenge Afghan **Exports to India: Investors**

Afghanistan's Ministry of Industry and Commerce on Friday said that barriers in the way of the country's exports to Indian markets have not been resolved despite officials from Afghanistan and Pakistan pledged to address the challenges in this sector.

Nisar Ahmad Ghoryani said officials from Afghanistan and Pakistan are expected to convene a meeting next month to discuss how to remove trade

Back in October, Afghan and Pakistani officials at the Pakistan-Afghanistan Trade and Investment Forum 2020 in Islamabad agreed to solve 16 out of 21 issues related to trade and transit between the two countries.

representatives called on officials of the two countries to address their

They said they are "sidelined" when it comes to Afghanistan-Pakistan talks

"There are a lot of challenges and the private sector is suffering its consequences. The Afghan government needs to resolve this issue so that we can overcome the issues facing transit of our goods through Pakistan," said Sayed Zaman Hashimi, CEO of Afghanistan Chamber

"We hope that the talks between the two countries continue to help settle down all these issues in the near future," said Naqibullah Safai, the head of Pakistan-Afghanistan Joint

According to officials, the customs departments of Afghanistan and



Pakistan agreed on a 28-article protocol on the electronic exchange of customs data aimed at boosting cooperation between the customs of

Afghanistan Chambers Federation between Afghanistan and Pakistan will significantly drop by the end including "extortion," transit issues

and the recent closure of the crossing points between the two neighboring

The institution has also predicted this year's Afghanistan-Pakistan trade to be

ACF deputy chief Khan Jan Alokozai said last month that m at least 900 trucks are traveling to Pakistan and from there to Afghanistan daily while it was at least 2,000 last year.

Contact Numbers

Kabul Police -119

Kabul Ambulance - 112

Wazir Akbar Khan Hospital

0202301360

Ata Turk Hospital

0202500312

Corona call center - 166

OIC called on...

to the Afghan government in its efforts to bring peace, both through talks and via the work of the Afghan forces.

The OIC welcomed the successful renewal of the partnership between the international community and Afghanistan through the 2020 Afghanistan Conference in Geneva, especially in ensuring economic and social development in the country.

The OIC and its member states documented their support for various regional economic and infrastructure initiatives seeking to enhance corporation between Afghanistan and

These include the trans-Afghanistan railway project, TAPI project and CASA 1000 regional power project.

Kabul, meanwhile, appreciated the OIC resolutions, reflecting the collective Islamic community's viewpoint. The Afghan government said it was looking forward to working closely with the OIC and its member states for the contents of these resolutions to be put in practice.

Framework for...

said Thursday.

Since the start of the talks in Doha, members of the contact groups of both sides of the peace negotiations have met several times to agree on the contested issue. This comes as pressures from Afghanistan's international partners mounts on both sides of the talks to compromise and show flexibility during the talks.

Kabul's negotiating team claims having agreed in principle with the Taliban delegation on rules and procedures for the Doha peace talks.

However, this does not mean a framework for the peace negotiations has been finalised, the government team said in a statement on Saturday night.

"The negotiating teams have only agreed in principle to the 21 articles of the rules & procedures, with the exception of the introduction because it requires further discussions. Therefore, in the joint meeting on Nov 17, 2020 in the presence ... of the host country, it was decided that the rules & procedures will only be considered final once they are presented to a general meeting of both delegations & approved there."

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Like A Rocket in...

home. One day, a rocket hit the garden, cutting an apple tree in half and burrowing deep into the ground.

But it didn't explode.

Mujib remembers how his father watered the area where the rocket hit, for years, hoping the bomb would eventually rust and never explode. Now he worries that Afghanistan is headed toward an explosion of violence. "And the fear is that in that space of war, things only get more extreme," he told the Times. "The violence only gets more extreme. The brutality gets more extreme. That if this slips into another generational conflict, what we've seen over the past forty years in terms of the brutality will probably pale in comparison to what will come." I recently watched a video of a talk given in June of this year by Dr. Zaher Wahab, an Afghan professor in Portland, Oregon, who laments the intensifying havoc and violence war is causing in Afghanistan. He and his wife lived there for six years, until about a year ago, when they concluded that the city was unlivable.

Dr. Wahab believes there is no military solution to Afghanistan's woes and calls for the United States to demilitarize as soon as possible. But he also offers ways forward.

multinational trust fund to justly assist with reconstruction in Afghanistan, including efforts to clear mines and clean up unexploded ordnance. Billions of dollars would be needed, commensurate to the sums spent on funding the war. He believes the United Nations should form a peacekeeping presence in Afghanistan relying on non-NATO countries.

The publication of the "Afghanistan papers" late last year highlighted the failure of the United States to accomplish any of its stated missions in Afghanistan. John Sopko, the Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction, expressed his astonishment over the "hubris and mendacity" he had witnessed on the part of U.S. military and civilian personnel in Afghanistan.

Despite its failures, the United States continues to bomb Afghan civilian areas. In 2019, the U.S. dropped 7,423 bombs and other munitions on Afghanistan.

For Afghan civilians, ongoing war means continued bereavement, displacement, and despair. Bereft of income or protection, many Afghan householders join militias, pledging their support and possibly their willingness to fight or even die. Hence the rise of the Afghan Local Police, numerous militias fighting for various warlords, the Afghan governments' fighting forces, including "ghost soldiers" who appear in name only, CIAtrained paramilitaries, and military contractors working for NATO contingents.

Afghanistan is a cauldron waiting to explode.

a former chief of defence) to

U.S. Army Major Danny Sjursen, retired, notes that in the 2020 election, neither presidential candidate questioned status quo norms about U.S. foreign policy being based on threat, force, and killing. Sjursen assures that pressure to change must, necessarily, flow from the

The United States has landed in Afghanistan like a rocket in a garden. It refuses to rust, it poisons the Earth, and even U.S. voters can't budge it. Normal life can't continue with us there.

Meanwhile, an inevitably arriving Taliban-led government—one already in control of most of the country—is growing more fanatic and deadly.

Many U.S. voters, and too many Afghans, weren't yet born when the current war was begun by the United States in 2001. Much of the U.S. public regards the Afghan people with deadly indifference.

Year after year, President after President, Americans continue to pretend the despair and futility we've caused in Afghanistan isn't our fault. We don't hold ourselves accountable.

But the forever wars, illegal and immoral, bankrupt our economy and our society as well. The military contractors become a sort of mafia. They are like a bomb in our garden, liable to explode.

And, unlike our Afghan counterparts, it's not a bomb we can complain about. After all, we put it there.

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outcome would be leaving it to Scott Morrison... the Governor-General (himself put forward for a Meritorious

Citation."

The executive director of the Australia Defence Association Neil James similarly points out while there have previously been proposals to rescind honours for "subsequent dishonourable behaviour", in this case it's a question of "whether the honour was deserved in the

James suggests it's "better to let passions cool", rather than make snap decisions in the wake of this report.

Ultimately though, someone

must decide. The worst

choose between conflicting advice from General Campbell and the Prime Minister. To avoid that, it appears Defence has decided to blink. Asked if General Campbell is still going to write to the Governor-General recommending

the citation be revoked, a spokesperson for Defence told the ABC in a written statement, "Defence is preparing a comprehensive implementation plan to action the Inspector-General's recommendations",

and "final decisions on this

Government." Decoding the language of Defence Media, it appears General Campbell's declaration

advice will be a matter for

10 days ago that he would write to the Governor-General is now in doubt. Pressure from veterans, the public and most importantly

Defence's political masters has undoubtedly had an impact. It now seems most unlikely the citation will be revoked.

Instead, the special forces deployment to Afghanistan will continue to be regarded as "meritorious", despite the 39 alleged war crimes.

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France: 62 police officers injured and 81 arrested at nationwide protests

As many as 62 police officers were injured and 81 people were arrested at so-called "freedom marches" across France on Saturday, according to the country's Interior Ministry.

Demonstrations took place throughout the country against a controversial new bill that would ban police images and increase

The ministry said 23 of the arrests took place in Paris and the other 39 in other locations.

Several videos published on social networks appeared to show police officers being beaten by demonstrators at the events.

Two people that took part in protests that were not in the capital reported they had been injured to the General Inspectorate of Police (IGPN),

Syrian freelance photographer, Ameer al Halbi, 24, who was covering the demonstration was injured in on his face, according to AFP.

Reporters Without Borders' secretary-general, Christophe Deloire, denounced what he said was "unacceptable police violence" against

A total of 133,000 people, 46,000 of them in Paris, took part in the protests, according to the Interior Ministry. Organisers put the figure at 500,000, with 200,000 of them in the capital. What were demonstrators speaking out against? The French parliament is currently examining article 24 of the National Security bill, which proposes criminalising the filming and publication of images of on-duty police officers. Media groups in France say it could impact journalists covering police operations, while other critics fear it's intended to dissuade citizens from holding the police accountable. The organisers of the protests ...



A look at the world

Trump may announce plans for 2024 presidential race during Biden's inauguration – portal

US President Donald Trump is considering the possibility of running in the 2024 presidential election and may make the announcement during Joseph Biden's inauguration on January 20, 2021, The Daily Beast news portal said citing own sources.

According to the web portal, Trump was discussing the specifics of the 2024 campaign launch with his advisers and confidants almost four years before the election.



About 47% of US residents support the outgoing president's participation in the 2024 presidential race, according to a survey by The Hill newspaper and the HarrisX pollster.

American citizens cast their ballots on November 3. According to estimates, made by major American TV channels, Democratic contender Joe Biden won more than the needed 270 electoral votes. Biden announced his victory. US incumbent President Donald Trump has not conceded the election. He is challenging the current outcome, claiming irregularities in the ballot processing in key swing states, and has filed lawsuits to fight his case in court.

States must certify election results until December 12. Electors cast ballots in their respective states on December 14. On January 6, 2021, the House and Senate convene for a joint session to count electoral votes and announce the results. On January 20, president-elect is sworn into office and officially becomes the president of the United States at the inauguration ceremony.

UK, France ink new deal to curb illegal migration



UK and France have signed a new agreement to tackle illegal migration via the English Channel.

The French government has agreed to double the number of officers patrolling French beaches, from where migrants launch their perilous journey to Britain.

British Home Secretary Priti Patel and French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin "reaffirmed their commitment to make this route unviable," as they signed the agreement, according to a government

"They signed an enhanced agreement which builds on the joint co-operation that has already seen the proportion of crossings intercepted and prevented rise from 41% in 2019 to 60% in recent weeks," the statement said.

Doubling the number of French security officers "will bolster the patrolling of the 150-kilometre stretch of coastline regularly targeted by people-smuggling networks and enable quicker response rates to suspicious activity, stopping migrants leaving French beaches in the first place and preventing more dangerous and unnecessary crossings." The two ministers also "agreed an enhanced package of cutting-edge surveillance technology - including drones, radar equipment, optronic binoculars and fixed

"On top of these new operational plans, we will introduce a new asylum system that is firm and fair, and I will bring forward new legislation next year to deliver on that commitment," Patel said, confirming once again British government's plans to curb migration into the country.

More than 8,000 people have crossed from French coasts to the UK this year, according to the local media reports.

Bangladesh starts construction of \$2B rail bridge

The Bangladeshi prime minister on Sunday inaugurated the construction of the largest dedicated rail bridge in the country.

Sheikh Hasina laid the foundation stone of the 4.8km-long double-line dual-gauge Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Railway Bridge virtually from her official residence in Dhaka.



The bridge would improve regional rail connectivity as it would allow Bangladesh Railway to operate more trains between the capital and the country's northwestern

Of the total 167.81 billion Bangladeshi taka [\$1.98 billion] mega project, the Japan International Cooperation Agency will provide \$1.4 billion while the rest will be financed by the government. The project is scheduled to be completed by

The South Asian country's northwestern part is mainly an agricultural zone, and most of the country's sugar and jute mills are located here.

The premier said the project will bring economic benefits, and provide transportation to people and goods at a cheaper rate.

Railway Minister Md Nurul Islam Sujan and Ambassador of Japan Ito Naoki also spoke on the occasion.









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