

Deep seaport needs feasibility study first, cautions committee

RAFIQ HASAN

A high-powered committee recommended the government conduct an extensive feasibility study on the site of the proposed deep seaport before going for the ambitious project.

The eight-member committee, led by Director General of the Department of Shipping Captain AKM Ahsanul Azim, submitted its report last week to the shipping ministry, suggesting floating of a yearlong project to run a study to identify suitable location for the

seaport that requires several thousand crores of taka.

The committee, after a month's study, also submitted a technical assistance project pro-forma (TAPP) to the government detailing all the requirements for the study that would cost Tk 4.74 crore.

The government would share 50 per cent of the cost and the rest would come from foreign sources, the report mentioned.

The TAPP has already been sent to the Planning Commission for its approval, officials at the shipping ministry said.

The deep seaport is expected to be built with the technical and financial assistance of foreign private investors, and an international tender should be floated on completion of the feasibility study, sources said.

The government also favours the idea of involving the neighbouring land-lock countries like Nepal and Bhutan in the project. The distance and road communication facilities with those countries will come into consideration for selecting the site.

Under the study project, 22

GP to cut tariff for pre-paid subscribers

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

GrameenPhone (GP) Limited plans to offer a tariff reduction package for its pre-paid subscribers soon.

The GP wants to halve per minute call charge from midnight to 8:00am and that for a particular number round the clock, a senior GP official said yesterday.

He said under the reduction package, per minute call charge will be Tk 3.00 from Tk 6.00.

Pre-paid subscribers, who constitute about 90 per cent of more than one million GP subscribers, created pressure on the GP authorities to reduce call charges as they had already reduced call rates for post-paid users from July 1.

Other cell phone operators also reduced call charges later.

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Divers yesterday search for people feared drowned after an over-crowded bus slid into a ditch, killing four instantly and injuring at least 25, in Chhoto Sadipur on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway.

PHOTO: STAR

AL cuts hartal hours for Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) has reduced tomorrow's hartal hours in Sylhet Division due to a religious programme there.

In the districts under Sylhet Division, hartal will be observed from 6:00am to 12:00noon, a party press release said yesterday.

Elsewhere in the country the hartal will be enforced from 6:00am to 6:00pm.

Earlier, the AL had shifted to

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LDCs need to unite

Dr Debapriya talks on Cancun debacle

STAR REPORT

Many may cheer at the breakdown of the Fifth Ministerial Meeting of the WTO at Cancun, but there are also reasons to think that the meet actually made some headway in a number of crucial areas, which needed to be clarified and concretised through further discussions and negotiations.

Interests of small countries like Bangladesh lie in consolidation and reform of the multilateral trading

regime through critical engagement in the WTO.

Talking to The Daily Star about his personal experience and views about the Cancun meet, Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya spoke on wide spectrum of issues that were raised during the five-day meet, the way they were dealt with, the double-speak, the slippery process of talks, the hopes and the despair and the final breakdown.

He feels the outcome of the

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Shot Iraqi councillor dies

AP, Baghdad

Aquila al-Hashimi, one of three women on Iraq's American-picked Governing Council, died yesterday, five days after she was shot and critically wounded by assailants, the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority reported.

She died about 11:30 a.m., said Gary Thatcher, coalition director of strategic communications.

Six men in a pickup truck ambushed al-Hashimi as she drove near her home in western Baghdad Saturday, shooting her in the abdomen. She was preparing to attend the United Nations General Assembly, which opened in New York on Tuesday.

"On behalf of the Coalition Provisional Authority and all its members, I offer condolences to her

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Free trade deal Dhaka to open talks with Delhi, Colombo, Islamabad soon

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh will shortly open bilateral dialogue with several countries including India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka on Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

As per Indo-Bangladesh agreement reached at the last Joint Economic Commission (JEC) meeting, Dhaka and New Delhi are due to start talks on the proposed FTA next month.

"The ministries concerned of Bangladesh and India are working on fixing the date for discussion on the FTA," Foreign Secretary Shamsur Mobin Chowdhury told

reporters at the weekly press briefing yesterday.

He said "We've also agreed in principle to have discussions with some other countries including Pakistan and Sri Lanka within a few months."

About the Indo-Bangladesh JRC meeting scheduled to be held in New Delhi on September 29-30, the foreign secretary said, "We're having preparatory meeting to develop our

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ADB approves grants for good governance

BSS, Dhaka

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved \$9,50,000 in technical assistance (TA) grants to support good governance initiatives in Bangladesh under an integrated strategy to fight corruption.

In two phases, the TA will support the government to develop a legal framework for secured transactions in public and private sector and creation of an independent anti-corruption commission, an ADB press release said yesterday.

The first phase of the TA will help develop a legal framework of a transparent registry and also support institutional governance

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Eight Marines hurt in Mosul attack

REUTERS, Baghdad

Eight US soldiers were wounded and their vehicle destroyed when their convoy was attacked in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul yesterday, a US military spokeswoman said.

"At 0910 (1:10 a.m. EDT) this morning there was a complex attack on a two-vehicle convoy in western Mosul," the spokeswoman said.

"The attack consisted of two IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices) followed by small arms fire. Eight soldiers were wounded in action, three seriously. One Humvee was destroyed."

The attack was the latest in a

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Sept 26		5-51 pm
Sept 27	4-49 am	

Prayer Timings		
September 26		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-15
Juma	12-15	1-20
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	5-57	6-02
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation