

Hardrock project DPRK team unhappy over progress of work

The visiting seven-member delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) called on Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain at the Bangladesh Secretariat yesterday, reports BSS.

Ri Song Dai, Chairman of State Commission for External Economic Affairs of the DPRK, is leading the high level delegation.

During the meeting they discussed in details the progress of work of Madhyapara Hardrock Project, the first hardrock mine project in Bangladesh being implemented with the financial and technical assistance of the DPRK.

Works Minister visits tilted bldg at Mugdapara

Housing and Public Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia visited South Mugdapara under Sabujbagh thana in the city yesterday to see the condition of a four-storied building there which has tilted on its side, reports BSS.

According to an official handout, Humayun Khadem, Chairman of Rajuk, was with the minister.

The minister asked the city dwellers to cooperate with the government and abide by Rajuk's rules to ensure the safety of life and property of the people.

Rajuk has so far identified about 600 buildings in the city constructed in violation of Rajuk rules. A task force has been constituted to identify all unauthorised buildings in the city.

The minister asked the Rajuk authority to take legal action against the owners of buildings constructed in defiance or breach of Rajuk rules and standards.

They expressed dissatisfaction over the progress of work which is scheduled to be completed by March 2001. But partial production is expected to start by the end of 1998. The work on the project begun in 1994 which needs six and a half years to go into full production.

The project involves outlay of Taka 687 crore of which the DPRK is providing the foreign exchange component Taka 522.61 crore as supplies credit. The production period of the project is estimated to be 30 years. About 16.5 lakh tons of hardrock will be extracted every year.

Discussions on further co-operation for the future development of untapped mineral resources of Bangladesh particularly limestone and hardrock were also held. The energy minister said the DPRK has a vast experience in extracting hardrock and limestone and it could further come forward with competitive offer to extract the untapped limestone and hardrock in Bangladesh.

Energy and Mineral Resources Secretary M Faizur Razzak, Ambassador of the DPRK to Bangladesh Song Won Sik and chairman of Petro-bangla S K M Abdullah were present.

Visits Rupsha bridge site

UNB adds: The North Korean technical delegation paid a visit to the proposed Rupsha bridge site at Lobon Chora in Khulna yesterday afternoon.

Later on, the delegation held a meeting with Khulna City Mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahnman and DC Kazi Rezaul Haque at the Circuit House and held a discussion on various technical aspects of the bridge.

Top foreign investors

From Page One
The letter was appreciative of the new guidelines saying that it would instill more transparency in capital issues and would also provide a greater guarantee about the use of funds and would improve the flow of information.

"We are equally happy to see that a greater role will be given to local investors in IPOs (initial public offerings) and rights issues," it said.

However, it expressed concern at the negative impact of a lock-in period for the FIs, while noting that the spectacular growth of 113 per cent of the DSE index in 1994 is unlikely to be matched this year because of the changed global investment climate.

The lock-in period, the letter said, prevents FIs from cutting their losses if the share price falls after an IPO or a rights issue, while noting that this phenomenon is yet to occur in Bangladesh but has happened in the neighbouring countries.

It added that most FIs would be unwilling to take this extra risk, unless they can acquire the share at a large discount.

"We fear the negative effects of the lock-in period may be greater than the positive effects they were meant to provide", it said, while noting that

Two US staff shot dead

From Page One
purpose the gunmen attacked our colleagues, we do not know now."

No one claimed responsibility, and US and Pakistani officials did not say who they suspected. But in a country where rumours circulate freely, observers offered several possible theories.

They include revenge for last month's arrest and extradition to the United States of Ramzi Yousef, a prime suspect in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York.

Some Pakistanis opposed the extradition of Yousef, an Iraqi. The US Embassy in Islamabad and the consulate in Karachi tightened security following Yousef's arrest.

Also, drug barons are angry that Pakistan has extradited suspected drug traffickers to the United States and is planning to send several more.

Meanwhile, militant Muslim groups have accused the United States of involvement in Karachi's worsening violence, though there has been no evidence to support the claim.

The US consulate in downtown Karachi was immediately closed to the public after today's shooting, which took

place about three kilometers away at a busy intersection on Shara-e-Faisal road.
The American flag flew at half-staff and a large contingent of heavily armed Pakistani police stood guard outside the fortified US compound. Americans who work at the consulate were advised to stay in their homes for safety.
"An intensive search has been ordered," said Pakistan's Information Secretary Hussein Haqqani. "The government will spare no effort to find and arrest those responsible."
Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto is planning an official visit to Washington next month where she will meet US President Bill Clinton. Also, First Lady Hillary Clinton is scheduled to visit Pakistan for two days at the end of this month.
"This is a serious terrorist action that was meant to sabotage the prime minister's visit to America next month," said Abdullah Shah, the chief minister of Sindh Province, which includes Karachi.
"There are people who do not want an improvement in Pakistan's relations with the United States," Shah said after he met with US Ambassador John Monjo at the US consulate.



Dr Muhammad Yunus of Bangladesh, Chairman of the Grameen Bank, addresses participants at his workshop on "Women and Children in Poverty: What Way Out", held in Copenhagen Tuesday.

Declaration

From Page One

breaking decisions on resources, observers here said.
The G-77 bloc, to which Bangladesh and other SAARC countries belong, said that they were close to an agreement on the contentious 20:20 initiative, but will not agree to a cut in military spending.

"The G-77 countries are pushing for an explicit statement by the industrialised countries on the 20:20 concept," commented Ceilito Habato, heading the Philippines delegations to the summit. "I think we have more or less agreed, but the main points are still being worked out."

Bangladeshi Planning Secretary Dr Haroonur Rashid, who is heading a 12-member team to deal with the technical matters, observed that the negotiations on the three basic themes of the summit were yet to take shape.

Talking to The Daily Star at the main lounge of Bella Centre, the seat of the Social Summit, he said countries like Bangladesh have to depend on increased aid flow not only to sustain but also to strengthen its economic programmes.

When asked why this summit was important to Bangladesh, Dr Rashid said that the summit will help Bangladesh's national development programmes take a better shape.

It also send confusing signals about the progress of Bangladesh in opening up the economy. "And a free flow of capital is one of the freedoms investors are most sensitive about."

The letter said that it would also have a 'perverse' effect on local companies making it difficult and more expensive for them to attract funds from the FIs, and issue prices would have to be discounted in private placements and underwriting fees would have to be higher to allow for the extra risk. "Bangladesh is at a crucial stage of its development, and it would be a shame for it to close itself to cheap capital."

Another negative effect for the local brokers, it said, is that the shares may eventually be traded outside Bangladesh if they cannot be traded in the country. "A similar case happened in India, where dealing on the local market is so cumbersome that GDRs (offshore shares) have developed, cutting local brokers off from FIs transactions."

India has a lock-in period of five years for the FIs operating the its domestic securities market.

Foreign investors have invested some 200 million US dollars in the Bangladesh share market over the last couple of years.

Polls schedule of DU Senate

The schedule for election of 25 registered graduate representatives to the Dhaka University Senate has been announced, a university press release, said yesterday, reports BSS.

According to the schedule the last date of submitting nomination papers is March 15 while the last date of withdrawal is March 30.

The authorities will publish the list of the valid candidates on April 2.

The elections outside of Dhaka will be held on April 30 from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm while in Dhaka the election will be held on May 3 from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.

The polling centres are Dhaka University TSC, Chittagong University, Sylhet Government College, Victoria College in Comilla, Rajshahi University, M M University College in Jessore, Rajendra University College in Faridpur, Sher-e-Bangla Medical College in Barisal, Bangladesh Agricultural University in Mymensingh, Kumudini College in Tangail, Bhawal Badre Alam University College in Gazipur, Narsingdi Government College and Tolaram College in Narayanganj.

The results of the election will be published on May 6 at 3:00 pm at the administrative building conference room of the Dhaka University.

Indian girl Nabila acquitted

A court in the city yesterday released an Indian girl, Mina Mallick alias Nabila, who was charged with illegal entry into Bangladesh, reports UNB.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Shahiduddin Ahmed discharged the girl from the case filed by Tejgaon police under Section 4 (illegal entry) of International Boundary Violation Act.

Mina, daughter of Abdus Sattar Mallick of 5 Parkas Road, PS and Dist Bardwan in West Bengal, was arrested on November 17 last year when she tried to enter the Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan with a dagger in her vanity bag.

The dagger was detected by the scanning machine at the main entrance of Parliament building. Police arrested Mina and Ashfaq Hossain, a relative, who accompanied her.

Barrister Amirul Islam, who appeared for the Indian girl, told the court that the accused came to Bangladesh through Hill checkpoint accompanied by her maternal uncle Ashfaq Hossain with valid passport and visa.

On the plea of illegal entry, police removed the passport from her belongings at the time of illegal and unauthorised search, the lawyer said.

After hearing both sides, the court discharged the accused as the prosecution has failed to make out a prima-facie case against her.

Princess Anne is a small eater

The Princess Royal is a small eater. Despite all the fatigue from a busy itinerary here, she is eating very little and surviving on what an aide close to the royal visitor described as "bird's feed", reports UNB.

But in last two days, she has had a lot of hot chocolate, maybe to replenish energy required for a back-breaking four day tour, including her whirlwind forays to the countryside to see British-aided projects.

The 45-year-old princess, who was surely not on a diet and appeared slim, healthy and graceful, is an adept equestrienne who loves horse-riding. She was the 1971 Raleigh Trophy champion.

Although Princess Anne is putting herself up at the Presidential Suite of Dhaka Sheraton, her main meals are being supplied from the kitchen of the British High Commissioner's residence.

"The hotel is not serving the royal guest any heavy meals, but only fruit juice, tea, coffee, pasteurized milk imported from Australia and some special cheese," a chef at Sheraton told UNB.

Hotel attendants said Her Royal Highness occasionally eats some fresh fruits like kiwi, oranges and pineapples. She is also an avid reader, they said. Her bedside table was cluttered with books and papers, according to the attendants.

The princess was also very inquisitive and down-to-earth when, like any other foreign tourist in town, she reportedly asked one of the aides about "Bangabazar" where garments are sold cheap.

Hasina blames govt for food, fertiliser crisis

RAJSHAH, Mar 8: Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina today blamed corruption and indecision of the government for the food and fertiliser crisis in the country, reports UNB.

"The crisis will be serious if the government fails to tackle the situation immediately and ensure supply of fertiliser to farmers," she said addressing a workers' gathering at the Rajshahi Textile Mills this afternoon.

Hasina arrived here today to attend the AL workers' convention of Rajshahi Division to be held tomorrow at the Zilla Parishad auditorium.

Leaders of district committees and presidents and general secretaries of thana and union units of the party will join the convention. Workers of Rajshahi, Natore, Naogaon, Chapainawabganj and Pabna and Rajshahi city unit leaders and workers will attend.

Awami League leaders, workers and supporters received the party chief as she landed at the Rajshahi airport. Central leaders Abdul Mannan, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, Zillur Rahman, Mohammad Nasim and few others accompanied Hasina.

Another UNB report adds: Sheikh Hasina yesterday protested the remarks of Russian opposition leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy against the sovereignty of Bangladesh.

"The irresponsible, audacious and irrelevant utterance of the Russian ultra-nationalist leader was a naked interference in the sovereignty and independence of our dear motherland," she said in a statement.

Princess Anne and children, clean water, credit and saving services and traditional birth attendant training to a transient population of about 2,700.

Wearing a light-blue T-shirt with grey slacks, the Princess had a walkabout in the slum. During her half-an-hour visit, she observed SCF activities and also had little chit-chats with the slum inmates — exchanging greetings and enquiring their wellbeing.

The SCF, which runs some integrated projects for development of underprivileged children and improvement of living conditions in slum areas, spent nearly 762,700 pound sterling in the country last year.

On her way back, she visited one rural clinic near Rudia and was welcomed by Dr. Mohiuddin to the Ad-din Hospital in Jessore where she unveiled a plaque to inaugurate a new staff training wing.

Saifur

From Page One
women. Hence, such laws should be changed to ensure that women can move forward in our society.
President Abdur Rahman Biswas was the chief guest at the discussion meeting held at the Osman Memorial Auditorium under the aegis of the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs.

The Midnight File

Clinton condemns Karachi killing

WASHINGTON, March 8: President Clinton condemned today the killing of two US officials in Pakistan but does not expect the violence to alter plans by his wife to visit the country this month, a spokesman said. Press Secretary Mike McCurry said Clinton expressed "sadness and outrage" with the attack on Americans in Pakistan. McCurry said the US government was prepared to cooperate "with appropriate authorities" to track down those responsible, reports Reuter.

Three die in incidents

By DMCH Correspondent
At least two persons including a baby were killed, one reportedly committed suicide and several others injured in separate incidents in the city and Tongi yesterday.

A pedestrian was killed when a speeding bus knocked him down at Natun Bazar Bishwa Road under Gulshan police station in the morning.

The victim Motaieb died on the spot. The body was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsy.

In another road accident, one baby was killed and several others were injured when a Dhaka-bound Minibus overturned on the Airport Road at about 12:30 pm.

The victim Rafat, 2, died on the spot while the injured were admitted to different hospitals in the city.

Of the injured, Mohiuddin, 55, Sikander, 27, Hamida, 45, Moriom, 15, Lipi, 13, Mithun, 16, Abul Kalam, 30, Abdul Mannan, 16, Shiamim, 18, and Monirul, 40, were admitted to the DMCH. Later Mithun and Abul Kalam were shifted to the Orthopaedic Hospital (Pongu Hospital) and Combined Military Hospital (CMH) respectively.

Mohammad Altaf Hossain, 22, reportedly committed suicide at his residence at Haidarabad, Tongi in the morning.

In another incident a youngman aged about 18 was stabbed by a group of miscreants at Zahura Moholla, Mohammadpur at about 11 am.

The victim Gulzar Hossain was admitted to the DMCH.

JSD (Inu) demands trials of killers of Mujib, Zia, Taher & Manzur

By Staff Correspondent
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) presidium member Kazi Aref Ahmed and general secretary Hasanul Haq Inu in a joint statement yesterday demanded trials of the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Ziaur Rahman, Col Abu Taher and Major General Abul Manzur.

JSD leaders demanded formation of a special committee to probe into the killings of 2500 sepoys of the armed forces on October 2 in 1977.

They also demanded revival of the activities of a judicial investigation committee, which was formed to probe into the killing of former President Ziaur Rahman.

They deplored the fact that the case lodged against General Ershad charging him for illegally occupying state power remained in the cold storage.

Fertiliser

From Page One
demand punishment of the people responsible for price-hike of rice and fertiliser in local markets.

The demonstrators handed over a memorandum to the District Magistrate in absence of the DC and held a rally there with acting president of district unit of the Awami League Prof. Shahidullah in the chair.

The rally was also addressed by former MP Mirza Azam, general secretary of the district unit Awami League Rezaul Karim Hira, and Jubo League president Bijon Kumar Chondro.

ID cards

From Page One
their names for pre-qualification.

The enlisted firms would have to set up a computer network, prepare customised voters' database, collect photographs and prepare the ID cards.

The last date of enlistment is March 15.

When asked about the possible time required for accomplishing the whole task, the EC official said that at this stage and exact time frame could not be set because it was for the first time that such a major work had been undertaken by the EC.

When pressed to say if the work would be finished ahead of the next general elections, due by next February, he, however, said that the government may have to enact another law if any early elections were to be held.
Following the passage of the Election Commission Bill by the Jatiya Sangsad during its 17th session last October, no future parliamentary election can be held without the introduction of ID cards.



One of the many processions brought out in the city yesterday on the occasion of International Women's Day.

Four held for organising mass wedding

Police arrested four people from Narsingdi for organising a mass wedding of 150 couples — many of whom are reportedly teenaged — violating laws against child marriage, reports UNB.

They were put under one month's detention only a day before the mass ceremony scheduled at a local school at village Nayachar in Roypura thana.

A Narsingdi police source who wished to remain unidentified told UNB that the arrests were made under the Special Powers Act.

Nepali Congress expels 23 members

POKHARA, Nepal, Mar 8: The opposition Nepali Congress party has expelled 23 rebels who bolted from the party and contributed to its defeat in last November's elections, reports AP.

The party's first major conclave since the election was held in the tourist resort of Pakhara.

Bangladeshis

From Page One
menters. All the Indonesians escaped on motorcycles, except one who was apprehended and handed over to police.

Women's Day observed

From Page One
pression on the womenfolk.

The marches were followed by discussions, rallies and cultural programmes.

The celebration committee programmes were kicked off in the capital with a torch procession Tuesday. Some 300 women participated in the procession that marched from the Dhanmondi Boys' Club to the Ramna Park.

The committee's three-day programmes will conclude on Friday with another procession in the city starting from the Bangla Motors crossing at 9 am and terminating at the Ramna Park where a cultural programme would follow.

To mark the Women's Day, Dhaka Ahsania Mission held a discussion at its Dhanmondi central office. Chaired by M A Sobhan, the meeting was also addressed by Prof Nurul Islam, Md Sadekur Rahman, Shawqat Ara Haider, Chand Sultana, Afroza Khatun and Nurunnahar Begum.

A discussion session entitled "Women's Rights — Human Rights" was organised by Amnesty International, Bangladesh yesterday at the National Press Club.

The keynote paper was presented by noted journalist and human rights activist, Baby Moudud.

"Women's issues have to be put on the political agenda," she said. "For it is not possible for society and family to tackle them alone."

The session was attended by Professor Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir, Chairman, Political Science Department, Dhaka University as chief guest and presided over by Md Aftab Rahman, president, AI, Bangladesh.