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## Body to monitor state of utilities in high-rises

By Special Correspondent

The government has formed a committee headed by the Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, to prepare a 'position paper' on the state of utilities in the city vis-a-vis increasing demand for those from mushrooming high rise buildings.

The committee, formed on February 13, will give a 'situation report' within one month. Director General of the Department of Environment (DOE) AR Khan told newsmen yesterday. This will help planned growth of high rise residential and commercial buildings and shopping complexes in the city, he added.

The committee was formed at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Environmental Council which reviewed the pressure on utilities like gas, water, power and sewerage, and traffic congestion, garbage disposal and public health problems posed by high rises.

Khan said, as per the Environmental Code 97, the DOE is responsible for giving clearance

for high rises. But it is finding its job difficult to with a limited manpower and increasing pressure from builders. It has a manpower of 158 against 173 approved, he added.

Since November last year when the new system of obtaining 'no objection certificate' from the DOE was introduced before approval of building plans by RAJUK, the DOE is under pressure from builders who found the new system a 'hassle', he said.

All kinds of pressures are being applied and some builders even went to the extent of getting 'confusing information' published in newspapers, Khan said, clarifying DOE's position against allegations brought by a new real estate company which also owns a newspaper.

The trouble had started when the company was asked to account for the pressure on utilities and the provision for traffic through a ten-foot entrance road for a high rise housing complex for 165 flats. Provisions for parking only 100 cars were kept at the com-

plex, he added. Under the Environmental Code, DOE has to look into various aspects of a design with this limited manpower. It is not possible for DOE alone to provide clearance. "So we have proposed that the builders have to obtain clearance from providers of utilities to get approval from RAJUK", Khan added.

He also suggested that there should be new zoning, clearly marked for high rises in the city to avoid any environmental disaster in future.

The problems are mainly being created by builders who can easily get a plot declared 'commercial' by RAJUK, whose Chairman has the discretionary authority in this regard.

We have asked for repealing this system, he added.

Khan also suggested that shifting the capital should also be considered to avoid problems in future as the city has reached a choking point due to air pollution, thousands of auto-rickshaws and a traffic mess created by over 600,000 rickshaws.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina placing wreath at the Central Shaheed Minar at midnight — Star photo

## Ekushey belongs to the world

From Page 1

state language in the country. The spirit of fighting for any just cause enabled a brave Bengali nation later on to put an end to the colonial Pakistani rule through a bloody nine-month war in 1971.

All important city corners and road islands as well as the surroundings of central Shaheed Minar has been decorated with Bangla letters and verses written by eminent poets on the mother tongue.

All roads led to the central Shaheed Minar midnight last night, with streams of mourners offering wreaths at the alter of the martyrs' monument.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina led a grateful nation in paying tribute to the martyrs at the central Shaheed Minar as the clock struck 12.00.

People also laid wreath at the graves of the valiant martyrs of the Language Movement at Azimpur graveyard. Meanwhile, the president and the prime minister in separate messages paid glowing tribute to the golden sons of the soil for their supreme sacrifice.

President Sahabuddin called upon the countrymen and the expatriates to strengthen the existing spirit of Ekushey evident in the spheres of literature, culture and politics to build up a happy and prosperous nation.

"The nation felt proud to see that Bangla has been established in the country, and from now on it has been introduced in the international arena," said Sahabuddin.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her message on the Shaheed Day urged people both at home and abroad to pay the highest respect to the language martyrs through practising mother language in all spheres of life.

"The day has been glorified into a unique epic of grief and prestige in the national life of the Bengali," she said.

Today is a public holiday. Bangladesh Television, Bangladesh Deter and the satellite channels will be dishing out special programmes on the occasion. Newspapers will carry out special supplements highlighting the day's significance.

Different socio-cultural, political and professional organisations have chalked out programmes to observe the International Mother Language Day. The programmes include placing wreaths at all the Shaheed Minars in district and thana headquarters, discussions, cultural functions and *milad mahfil*.

Bengalis in the Indian state of West Bengal have also chalked out a three-day programme in Calcutta in memory of the heroes of the Language Movement.

Sammilita Nari Samaj (SNS) brought out a torch procession at TSC of Dhaka University yesterday demanding security of women in every spheres of life. "We need the guaranty that the women will be able to move everywhere at the first hour of the day," the SNS leaders demanded at a rally later.

Ruling Awami League, opposition BNP and their front organisations and other political parties have also taken up programmes to observe the day in a befitting manner.

Bangladesh Swachchasebak League, the front organisation of the ruling party, has chalked out a three-day programme in observance of the International Mother Language Day. Dhaka City Awami League will arrange a discussion meeting at Mahanagar Natya

Manch at 3pm today.

Black flags will be hoisted while national flag lowered to half-mast at party central and all branch offices at 5 am today.

Barefoot leaders and workers will join morning procession of Awami League wearing black badge at 7 in the morning and place floral wreaths at Azimpur and at the Central Shaheed Minar.

The morning procession (Probhat Ferry) will start from the southern gate of New Market, a party press release said.

A discussion meeting and cultural function will be arranged at Paltan Maidan at 3 pm tomorrow. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will preside over the meeting.

BNP also has drawn up elaborate programmes to mark the day. It will hoist black flag, and national flag and party flags at half-mast at central office today.

Party leaders and workers will gather in front of Balaka Cinema Hall at about 7 pm, wearing black badges, and join morning procession.

They will also place floral wreaths at the graveyard of the language martyrs at Azimpur graveyard and offer prayers for the great souls.

Local administration will honour 10 language fighters this year with gold medals and crests.

Schools, colleges and universities also have taken up elaborate programmes to observe the day with due respect.

## New EC policy won't cut aid flow

Nielson assures Prime Minister

European Commissioner for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Poul Nielson who arrived here yesterday said EC would continue its support for advance of socioeconomic programmes undertaken by the government, reports UNB.

He gave the assurance when he called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Ganobhaban in the afternoon.

Nielson, who had visited Bangladesh several times as Economic Cooperation Minister of Denmark, came here as Commissioner of continental Europe for the first time for an appraisal of socioeconomic progress taking place here.

Explaining the new food policy of the Commission he said EC would now give cash aid instead of food aid and the recipient countries would buy food on their own. The commissioner, however, assured that the new food policy would not reduce the volume of annual aid.

He said EC is ready to provide assistance in combating natural calamity, adding that presently the Commission is giving assistance in different sectors, including primary and mass education and health service.

Nielson said EC, a major donor to Bangladesh, would consider assistance in diversification of exports and expansion of private sector. The commission will identify new areas of cooperation in consultation with the government.

## Ekushey Award '99 distributed

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday distributed Ekushey Award-1999 among 10 distinguished personalities in recognition of their contributions in different spheres of national life, reports UNB.

The award recipients are: Hasan Azizul Haq (literature), Syed Hasan Imam (film), Subhash Dutta (film), Ali Zaker (drama), Manirul Islam (fine arts), Husna Banu Khanam (music), Fakir Alamgir (music), ABM Musa (journalism), KG Mostafa (journalism) and Altamas Ahmed (dance-posthumous).

The Prime Minister gave away the awards at simple ceremony at Osmani Memorial Hall in the morning.

Each award-recipient got a gold medal, Tk 20,000 and a citation.

State Minister for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader was present at the function.

The Commissioner praised the social-sector programmes and efficient management of 1998 devastating floods and said EC would play positive role in keeping the Dhaka-based international Jute Organisation effective.

Welcoming Nielson, the Prime Minister apprised him of her government's various programmes, including food security. She conveyed her greetings to EU President Prof Romano Prodi.

Mrs Amre-Marie Nielson and Head of EC Delegation in Bangladesh Ambassador Antonio De Souza Menezes were present.

## Prel investigation 'RCC Mayor not found guilty'

RAJSHAHI, Feb 20: The SP of railway police has said preliminary investigation didn't find Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu as the main or general accused in a case filed under the Public Safety Act.

"We can't describe Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu as an accused following the preliminary investigation," SP Majedul Haq told UNB today. He also dismissed that Minu was the main accused in the case.

He said the plaintiff of the case, the guard of the shuttle train that came under attack, didn't mention any name. "So it is not possible to arrest anyone before detail inquiry."

The plaintiff in the *ejahar* only said the train came under attack by people of a procession where Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu was also present," said the SP who came here from Syedpur to investigate into the case.

## Hundi dealer arrested in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Feb 20: Police today arrested Sudhir Mahajan in front of Bangladesh Bank for his alleged involvement in smuggling of foreign currencies through hundi, reports UNB.

In his confessional statement to police, Sudhir named Alsaruddin of village Noapara under Raozan thana as the gang leader of foreign currency smugglers.

Police raided a number of places in the city in a bid to nab Alsar and his other associates. But none could be arrested till late tonight.

## ETV to go on air next month

Ekushey Television (ETV), the country's first private national television network, will go on air in March with regular broadcasts and transmissions, an ETV press release said yesterday.

Ekushey Television will be a Bangla-language terrestrial network which can be seen with both normal television aerials as well as with cable and satellite connections. Eventually the whole country will be able to watch Ekushey, free of any cost, without any additional antenna, receivers or dishes.

From early March, Ekushey Television will launch a short, nightly schedule of drama, entertainment, sports and documentaries designed to give viewers a taste of what will be coming to their screens. This schedule is designed to promote Ekushey Television and test its equipment, and will also carry information about how to tune in to the new TV network.

On the Bengali New Year's Day, on April 14, 2000, Ekushey Television will be expanding to introduce a daily programme schedule of up to 10 hours. By June this is expected to reach 12 hours or more.

Ekushey Television is planning a dynamic, exciting and innovative schedule of programmes, including news & current affairs; drama and entertainment; films and Art;

music and culture and sports and national events, according to the press release.

"The arrival of Ekushey Television in March will be an historic moment in the development of the broadcast media in Bangladesh," said Abu Sayed Mahmud, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Ekushey Television.

"Over the next few months, Ekushey Television will gradually be more widely received around the country, finally reaching 90% of the population. Our use of satellite will also make Ekushey Television available to Bangladeshi communities throughout Asia, the Middle East, Europe and North America."

Ekushey has taken up the challenge," Mahmud added, "to provide a popular, responsible and quality television service of choice to the people of Bangladesh. Our commitment is to change, through entertainment and information."

Ekushey Television, says the press release, will not only be the best in entertainment, but also the broadest of the country's first independent television news programmes.

"This has been a huge technical undertaking," added Mahmud, "requiring the learning of many new skills."

## Prisoner dies at N'ganj

From A Correspondent NARAYANGANJ, Feb 20: A prisoner in Narayanganj District Jail died in the early hours today.

Jail officials said Abdur Rahim, 33, a heroin addict, arrested from Char Kashipur under Fatulla thana on February 14. He was sent to jail *hajaj* by the court on February 15.

Rahim, son of Abdur Kartim of Char Kashipur, fell ill after midnight on Saturday night. He died on the way to hospital.

His body was handed over to his relatives after autopsy at Narayanganj hospital in presence of a first class magistrate.

## Clinic employee murdered at Khalishpur

From Staff Correspondent KHULNA, Feb 20: Yunus Ali, 28, an employee of a clinic, was murdered at Khalishpur early this morning.

Proprietor of the clinic Dr Zahidur Rahman was not there when the murder was committed on the ground floor of the clinic at BIDC Road under Khalishpur thana.

Police said they were looking for Masudur Rahman, another employee of the clinic. Masud and Yunus used to share a room of the clinic.

No case was recorded till filing of this report at 7 pm tonight.

## Maoists kill 22 policemen in Madhya Pradesh

NEW DELHI, Feb 20: Striking for a second straight day, suspected Maoist rebels today triggered a land mine, killing 22 policemen in central India. Press Trust of India news agency said, reports AP.

The mine blew up a truck carrying nearly 40 policemen on a patrol near Narayanpur in Bastar district in Madhya Pradesh state, PTI quoted AN Singh, additional director-general of police, as saying. The area is 1,125 kilometers (700 miles) southeast of New Delhi.

Although there was no immediate claim of responsibility, Singh blamed the attack on the

People's War Group. Those killed included a police officer, PTI said.

On Saturday, the PWG guerrillas had killed seven policemen in an attack on a police post in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh state. They stole 17 self-loading rifles, three carbines, one light machine-gun and one pistol from the police post in Dharukonda, a town 800 kilometers (500 miles) east of Hyderabad, the capital of Andhra Pradesh state.

The PWG, an outlawed outfit, has intensified attacks since the Dec 2 deaths of its three top commanders in an encounter with police in Andhra Pradesh state. The PWG has been blamed for 60 incidents of violence since then.

## Pakistan expels 3 Indian diplomats

ISLAMABAD, Feb 20: In apparent retaliation for the expulsion of its diplomats from neighbouring India, Pakistan today announced the expulsion of three Indian diplomats, reports AP.

The men, Gopal Chandra Roy, Asit Bran Das and R Sankaranarayanan have to leave Pakistan by Feb 27. There was no immediate comment from India.

They have been found indulging in activities incompatible with their official status," said a Pakistan foreign ministry statement.

"A strong protest was lodged about the irresponsible conduct and activities of these officials," said the statement without elaborating.

## 6 homeo shops

From Page 1 gross negligence of duty by two of its officials - Inspector Shahabuddin and Assistant Sub Inspector Abul Kalam.

Inspector Shahabuddin was suspended yesterday after the DNC inquiry committee submitted its report to its DG. Kalam had been suspended earlier.

## Two shot in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Feb 20: Two persons received bullet wounds in two separate incidents here within a span of 24 hours, police sources said.

Md Mobarak, 30, received bullet wound in his chest when the muggers fired on him at West Madarbari at 11 am today, police said.

He was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where his condition was stated to be critical.

The muggers fled the scene after local people chased them, witnesses said.

In another incident, Abu Taher, a candidate of the forthcoming SSC examinations received bullet wounds when alleged dacoits fired on him at Sokerkul village under Banskal thana at 2:30 am last night, police source said.

The dacoits opened fire when Abu Taher tried to resist the dacoits who stormed into his house and decamped with valuables, source added.

The injured Taher was admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

একুশ আমার একুশ বিশ্বের

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