

No progress in Buriganga protection project

Encroachers extend occupation as ministries await fund disbursement

By Staff Correspondent

Four different ministries have failed to make any progress in implementation of the Tk 70 crore Protection and Development of River Buriganga Project.

Thanks to such administrative inertia, encroachers are extending their occupation on the southern side of the river, Kamrangirchar and other parts. An embankment, built by the Water Development Board (WDB), has, however, worked as a safeguard against encroachment on the north-east side.

For months the water resources, environment, land and public works ministries have failed to secure any money from the government to protect the Buriganga, sources said. The failure has encouraged increased encroachment on the river.

meeting of the four ministries had decided three months back to solicit Tk 19 crore from the Planning Commission to implement the project.

However, the WDB has so far received only one crore taka and spent nearly Tk 68 lakh to reclaim land from illegal occupiers, informed an official requesting anonymity.

"As the water resources ministry was given the responsibility to implement the project, it sent the request letter to the Planning Commission for allocation of money," said an official source in the WDB.

When asked what they intended to do to protect the river, the official replied that they immediately needed to build an embankment on the southern side to stave off aggressive encroachment.

If Tk 19 crore is allocated, the

WDB would have to spend up to Tk eight crore to reclaim the river area from encroachers, said the official adding that about 30 per cent of the entire project money would be spent on land reclamation.

Planning Commission sources said they had received an official letter from the water resources minister for an additional allocation of Tk 19 crore for the Buriganga project. Any request for additional funding takes a long time to process, they added.

Moreover, requests of the water resources ministry for Tk 329 crore in additional payments in different projects lie pending with the Planning Commission, informed an official there.

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Sena Kalyan Sangstha, one of the most aggressive encroachers of the river Buriganga, is removing its 97-foot encroachment. However, many others are extending encroachment, thanks to a non-starter Buriganga protection project.

—Star photo

Nantu Murder Case

Shikdar, Nasir, Jamai Faruque to die

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Jan 18: Ershad Shikdar and his two accomplices Jamai Faruque and Nasir Khan have been sentenced to death in the sensational Nantu Murder Case today.

The Additional District and Sessions Judge (3rd court) Taj Mohammad delivered the judgement at noon.

The court, however, acquitted seven other accused in the case. They are Noor-e-Alam, Idris Jamai, Bashir alias Babu, Jamai Sardar, Mujibar Shikdar, Ashraf Shikdar and Liaquat Lashkar. Noor-e-Alam was approved.

With this, Ershad Shikdar was sentenced to death in six cases and rigorous imprisonment for life in another case.

The total number of death sen-

tences given to Jamai Faruque stands at four.

The murder case was recorded with Khulna thana on March 30, 1990 accusing 19 who were all acquitted by the court.

Later, the case was revived following judicial confession of Noor-e-Alam on August 31, 1999. The supplementary chargesheet was submitted on September 3, 2000 accusing the ten.

According to the prosecution, Nantu was beaten to death by Shikdar and his accomplices on March 29, 1990 as he informed the police of their illegal drug business.

They later dumped his body into the river Bhairab at Skid ghat.

After examining 18 witnesses and records, the judge pronounced the judgement.

Biman's restructuring plan lands in rough waters

Lukewarm response from prospective strategic partners

By Shehab Ahmed

Bangladesh Biman's restructuring and commercialisation programme has landed in rough waters due to poor response from prospective airlines to become its strategic partner under a World Bank aided project designed by the Citibank group of New York, sources concerned said.

Under the two million dollar programme, the government would retain 51 per cent share of the national carrier, 40 per cent would be sold to a strategic partner (not to be from South Asia and rivals of Biman) and the rest nine per cent would be given to Biman officials and employees.

Proposal (RFP) to off-load its 40 per cent shares to prospective strategic partners on December 2 last year and extension of the date till January 7, only two airlines have responded positively.

But a number of major airlines from Europe and North America stayed off the RFP, making queries with the Citibank which is working as Biman's privatisation consultants, the sources said.

The restructuring is scheduled to be completed by March this year.

So far, the Gulf Air and Qatar Airways have submitted RFP to the Biman.

But aviation sources said that a tie-up with the two Gulf airlines,

considered as rivals of Biman in its most lucrative sector, would not promote its business but harm it.

They noted that the Gulf sector is the most profitable sector for Biman with a steady flow of manpower to the Middle East. The second most profitable sector is the Far East and the third is Europe. The US sector still remains in the red.

Biman sought a potential partner with dominance in Europe and Americas such as Air France, Lufthansa, Alitalia, Air Canada and American Airlines which made queries with the Citibank on the RFP.

Asked about the next step, See page 11 col 3

Correction

In a news item on the cassette case, published on the back page yesterday, it was reported that Justice Naimuddin Ahmed had an alleged conversation with jailed former president Ershad. Actually the name will be Justice Latifur Rahman.

In another item on Bangabandhu murder case, carried on the front page of the same issue, the date for completing supplementary paper book of the case was mentioned as January 14 instead of January 31. We regret the errors.

Police 'informer' shot in city

By Staff Correspondent

A police informer was shot by unidentified miscreants in the city's Mirpur area on Wednesday night.

The victim was identified as Javed Hossain, son of Ahmed Hossain of Mirpur Section-11. See page 11 col 8

Life-saving drugs in illegal shops

DMCH patients 'forced' to queue up at four stores

Star Report

Most of the patients in emergency ward at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) are 'forced' to buy life saving drugs from four medicine shops adjacent to the hospital, it is alleged.

The shops set up illegally on both sides of the entrance to the emergency wing are owned by some 'influential doctors' of the DMCH, who do not have trade licence for this, sources concerned said.

The sales at the four shops, kept open round the clock, come to a total of about Tk one lakh even on a dull day, a shop employee said requesting anonymity.

"Supply of drugs is no problem for us. We get the supply mainly from Mitford drug market," he said.

Another employee said sales at these shops rise when hospital offices remain closed (2:30 pm to 8 am). Patients requiring antibiotics, other medicines and even saline and bandages have to buy those from the shops.

He also said a section of hospital staff steal drugs, mostly life saving ones, from the hospital store and sell those to these shops. See page 11 col 6

Central depository MD resigns amidst criticism

Facing serious criticism from a section of board members, Central Depository Bangladesh Limited (CDBL) Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) AGM Shamsul Kamal submitted his resignation on Tuesday, reports UNB.

A board meeting scheduled for Tuesday was expected to review final negotiation processes with two short-listed vendors for installing necessary hardware and software, sources said.

A negotiation committee of the CDBL had completed its final round of negotiations with CMC of India one of the bidders for the proposed depository. The other short-listed bidder is the CDC of Pakistan.

Sources said the CDBL deferred the meeting as some of its members refused to attend the meeting and give verbal presentation on the final

negotiations without documents.

When the chairman asked the members to come to the board meeting, ICBMD said he would attend the meeting to protest inefficiency of its secretariat, which failed to provide documents of different meetings of CDBL committees.

"I did not receive minutes of the advisory committee which was held over a month back," sources quoted the ICBMD as saying in the meeting. He pointed out that the DSE chairman also brought similar allegation and refrained from attending the meeting.

Few board members also requested the CDBL chairman to look into the matters and reply to DSE chairman's letter.

"CDBL could not give a p r e s e n t See page 11 col



Shops at New Market in the city remained closed yesterday in protest against encroachment upon the square in front of an old mosque in the area. Traders allege a group of unscrupulous people are out to take over the mosque area.

—Star photo

Pro-opposition lawyers' silent procession on Sunday

By Staff Correspondent

Pro-opposition lawyers of different courts in the city will bring out a silent procession on Sunday protesting the 'false' case against 16 leading lawyers and a BNP lawmaker and demanding repeal of the Public Safety Act (PSA).

The procession would start from the Supreme Court (SC) premises at 1 pm and terminate near the Jatiya Press club. Leaders of the lawyers would announce their next programme there.

The Sarbadaliya Ainjibi Oikyo Parishad yesterday announced the programme following a meeting at the SC South Hall yesterday.

The meeting urged district level lawyers to form units of the Parishad.

It was addressed by, among others, Convenor of the Partishad Barrister Nazmul Huda, Member-Secretary Zainal Abedin, Assistant Secretary of SC Bar Association Giasuddin Mithu and Iqbal Bin Bashar.

Cassette case Lawyer's submission on behalf of 4 dailies begins

By Staff Correspondent

Barrister Rukonuddin Mahmood yesterday started his submission on behalf of four national dailies in the cassette scam case before a division bench of the High Court.

The daily Manob Jameen is facing contempt charges for publishing reports and comments on the conversation between Ershad and Justice Latifur Rahman in the Janata Tower case. The other three dailies Ittefaq, Sangbad and Janakantha are facing similar charges.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Jan 19		5.35 pm
Jan 20	6-43 am	

Prayer Timings		
January 19		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-10
Juma	12-15	1-20
Asr	4-05	4-20
Maghrib	5-40	5-45
Esha	7-15	7-35

Organised racket behind credit card forgery

By Staff Correspondent

An organised racket is involved in credit card forgery in the country, investigation has revealed.

The forgery came to light when a German citizen, Peter Herzer, returned home from Bangladesh.

Peter came here on March 4, 1999 and left on March 10. He stayed at Hotel Sonargaon during his visit. On his return home, Peter was asked to pay four bills in Bangladesh. He then complained to Hotel Sonargaon, which brought the matter to the notice of the then ANZ Grindlays Bank.

The bank filed a case. After investigation, it was revealed that the four bills were sent against his account from places in Bangladesh

where he did not even go.

So far, six persons including three Bangladeshi born British citizens have been arrested for their alleged involvement in credit card forgery.

Twelve fake credit cards and a machine to make such cards were confiscated from their possession, sources in Detective Branch of police said.

Three of them including a Bangladeshi born British citizen were arrested with three fake credit cards from Sonargaon Hotel in the city on January 2. They are Mohammad Ibne Razzak, Suhel Ahmed and Mohammad Pappu Gani.

Acting on a tip-off, DB police led by Assistant Commissioner Akram raided a room of the hotel and arrested them. All of them hail from Sylhet. Razzak is a British citizen.

Prior to their arrest, Razzak had made payments to Sheraton Hotel and Hotel Sonargaon by using counterfeit cards, the sources said.

But on January 2, when Razzak produced his credit card at Sonargaon Hotel, authorities there checked it with Grindlays Bank, which cross-checked it with Sainsbury Bank, Plc. UK. The Sainsbury Bank told Grindlays Bank that a card bear See page 11 col 7

Degree examinees put up barricade on road in front of Dhaka College

By Staff Correspondent

Degree examinees of Dhaka College today put up a barricade on Mirpur Road and damaged vehicles demanding examination center at the college, witnesses said.

The examinees came out of the college at about 1:30 pm, put up the barricade and damaged at least 12 passing vehicles, witnesses said.

The students blocked the road for about 15 minutes.

Dhanmondi thana police rushed to the spot and removed the barricade at 1:45 pm.

None was arrested in this connection till filing of this report last night.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam