

Funds for repair of some city roads may be cut

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Funds earmarked for rehabilitation of some dilapidated city roads are likely to be cut as part of a government plan to reduce spending under the Annual Development Programme (ADP).

Tk 18 crore has been earmarked in the current ADP for rehabilitation of some city thoroughfares which have been in poor condition for years.

A meeting at the planning commission on Wednesday informed Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) officials that the government is thinking not to fund the rehabilitation project in the current financial year.

But DCC has already issued work orders to eleven firms through bidding after the LGED ministry approved about Tk 19 crore for the project, of which Tk 18 crore was earmarked in the current ADP. The project got pre-ECNEC approval and was waiting for ECNEC approval.

The project includes rehabilitation of roads from Mowchak to Mogbazar, Shajahanpur to Kamalpur, Sishu Mela to Rokeya Sarani, Gulistan crossing to Rajdhani Super Market, Jaikali Mandir Road, Nawabpur Road, Green Road, Panthapath, Tongi Diversion Road and Dhanmondi road No 27.

Officials concerned said the roads are in bad shape due to heavy traffic, water logging during rainy season and road digging by different agencies throughout the year.

"Most of these roads were not rehabilitated during the last two years", a DCC official said.

Step to check pilferage of goods from Ctg Port

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

In order to check pilferage of goods from its restricted area, the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) has decided to entrust its security department alone with the whole responsibility of taking care of imported cargo containers.

The decision was taken at a meeting held in the port yesterday with CPA Chairman Commodore Golam Robbani in the chair. The meeting was attended by, among others, the representatives of Bangladesh Steamers Agents Association, Bangladesh Masters Stevedores Association and C & F Agents Association.

According to the decision, the security department alone will be responsible for guarding and maintaining all containers in the restricted areas since their arrival to and delivery from the port, sources said.

However, the port users apprehend that the new decision might hamper speedy loading, unloading and delivery of goods as the security department may delay the entire process keeping the users hostage for illegal benefit.

Hasina: Prepare lists

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asked her party workers to project this to the people.

"You did not capitalise on the achievements of Awami League in last five years. Still, there is time, tell the people the success stories," she added.

Hasina also instructed her partymen not to be engaged in fresh quarrels when they prepare the report on election. "You need to be united for counter-action. We will solve our internal problem. Enemies will have to be resisted unitedly."

Hasina blasted the past caretaker government for "helping the alliance win the election". She recalled that the first step of this caretaker government was the transfer of 13 secretaries. She also blamed the Election Commission for joining hands with the caretaker government.

The "conspirators" targeted 110-120 seats where the win of Awami League was inevitable. They listed 10 to 15 centres in each of those seats and did not allow any Awami League voter, she said.

Hasina said the home ministry prepared a list of Awami League strongholds terming those as vulnerable and supplied the list to army. Awami League activists were identified as terrorists in those lists and sent across the country, she added.

She said in Munshiganj-4, AL candidate was leading in three centres where the polling was postponed. But later, polling was shown postponed in four more centres to confirm the defeat of Awami League candidate Mohiuddin, she added.

Sources said Tk 62.5 crore funds for different DCC projects have been cancelled as part of the new government's plan to cut expenditure of Tk 2000 crore from the ADP.

The funds include Tk 30 crore, withdrawn from different projects for the 13th NAM Summit which was originally scheduled to be held in Dhaka later this year. The government has decided not to host the summit.

Talking about the work orders, a senior DCC official said, "When a project gets pre-ECNEC approval, usually it is approved by ECNEC. So we floated tenders after the project got pre-ECNEC approval."

DCC officials however failed to say anything about the future of the roads. One of them said, "It depends on the government."

CCCI, CMP forms committee to fight terrorism

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A joint meeting of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) and top officials of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) yesterday formed a 'Monitoring Committee' to bolster concerted efforts to free Chittagong from terrorism, extortion and criminal activities, and ensure safety life and property of people.

The committee will sit every 15 days to review the progress in this regard. The law enforcing authorities will take stern action against the miscreants found guilty as per the decision of this review meeting, CCCI sources said.

The joint meeting was addressed, among others, by CCCI president Farid Ahmad Chowdhury, DC (Port) of CMP Naim Ahmad, senior vice president of CCCI SM Nurur Haq, vice president MA Latif, CCCI directors Morshed Murad Ibrahim, M Amirul Haq and Sarwar Maqsood Nizam, and Assistant Commissioner of CMP M. Palit, OC (Port) Golam Mowla and OC (Double mooring) Monir Uddin.

15 hurt as AL, Jamaat workers clash in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

At least 15 people including several women were injured when supporters of local Awami League and Jamaat-e-Islami clashed in a village under Sadar upazila yesterday.

Of the injured, Rina Khatun, 30, Marium, 55, Maniruzzaman, 28, and school teacher Abdul Alim, 30, were admitted to Pabna general hospital in critical condition.

Police said the clash erupted as a sequel to long rivalry between local AL leader Saker and Jamaat leader Abdul Kuddus.

Both the groups, equipped with sharp weapons and sticks, locked in the sporadic clash that began in the morning and continued till the afternoon. A number of crackers were also blasted during the clash.

Verdict in Mouze Ali Murder Case on Nov 20

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khandaker Hasibuddin Ahmed, Additional District and Sessions Judge of the third court will deliver judgement in the Mouze Ali murder case on November 20.

Notorious terrorist Ershad Shikder is the principal accused in the case. Of the 14 accused in total, eight were present at the court yesterday when the date for judgement was announced after completion of the argument. Six out of 14 accused are still absconding.

Mouze Ali, a handling worker of Khalishpur CSD Godown was hacked to death at the Skid Ghat by Ershad Shikder on October 10, 1994. A murder case was recorded with Khalishpur thana on that night. But investigation of the case could not proceed allegedly due to political influence. The case was revived in 1999.

Mouze Ali was murdered by Shikder and other accused in the case reportedly for opposing pilferage of foodgrain from barges and fuel from railway wagons.

Jubo Dal activist murder: 17 AL men sent to Gazipur jail

UNB, Gazipur

Seventeen leaders and workers of local Awami League, accused of killing a Jubo Dal activist, were sent to jail hajat when they appeared before the court in Gazipur yesterday.

The magistrate court rejected the bail petitions of the accused including Singhsree UP chairman Ashrafuddin Khan Al-Amin.

A case was filed accusing 21 people of killing Mukter Hossain, a Jubo Dal activist of Singhsree, Kapasia, on October 5.

Earlier, three other accused in the case, including Tanzim Ahmed Sohel, MP, were granted bail.

Two candidates

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Election Commission (EC) press release.

Rowshan had lost to Justice Abdus Sattar of BNP in the 1981 presidential election.

The EC will scrutinise the nomination papers today. Those can be withdrawn tomorrow.

The final list of presidential candidates will be announced after 5pm tomorrow.

Meanwhile, Special Security Force (SSF) was deployed for Badrudzoa following submission of his nomination papers. The foreign minister did not attend his office yesterday. His close aides said he would no more attend office.

His seat in parliament and the post of foreign minister will fall vacant once he takes oath as president. Oath-taking is likely within this week.

According to BNP insiders, the prime minister might hold charge of the foreign ministry. Reaz Rahman is State Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Till recently, names of Law Minister Moudud Ahmed and party lawmaker M Morshed Khan were discussed as successor of Badrudzoa as foreign minister.

Bush, Vajpayee

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"candid discussions" with partners in the global coalition behind the United States.

"I was glad to be able to make the case as to why we're going to be successful," said Bush, who said he would travel to India "as soon as possible" in response to a renewed invitation from Vajpayee. He did not specify a date.

In a joint statement the White House released after the meeting, both sides agreed to deepen economic ties and expand cooperation on defense issues and the fight against terrorism.

"Economic and commercial relations are expanding. We've agreed to broaden the bilateral economic dialogue to include new areas of cooperation," Vajpayee insisted at a joint appearance after a closed-door meeting.

"I look forward to working to foster ties that will help both our economies. Trade with India is going to be an important part of our growth in the future," Bush said, also paying tribute to the world's largest democracy's "fantastic ability to grow." The statement said the joint Defense Policy Group would meet in Delhi in December; India's Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani has been invited to visit Washington; and the United States will boost anti-terrorism and drug interdiction assistance.

The two sides also agreed to launch an initiative to combat cyber-terrorism; enhance consultations on US missile defense plans; expand cooperation on export controls; and seek to boost high-technology commerce.

Bush and Vajpayee agreed to consult on the post-Taliban future of Afghanistan and on "an active role" for Delhi.



Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina consoling the wife of slain Shariatpur district Awami League leader Advocate Habibur Rahman during her visit to the district yesterday. Habibur Rahman was gunned down in post-election violence.

Fear, insecurity still haunt

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masked men returned and started searching thoroughly my hut. They took away whatever they found."

Panchanan Kumar Das, Pabitra Kumar Das and many others recounted similar tale in horrified remembrance. From rubber slippers to old kathans (blankets), they lost everything to the looters.

"We bought new clothes for Durga Puja. But the attackers looted everything," said Pabitra.

Dhirendra Das, an octogenarian, said, "The attack was aimed at driving us out of our homes and grabbing our land."

Intimidation and psychological torture was perpetrated to damage the morale of the Hindus. "Youths verbally abuse me. They say I have no right to live here. They ask me to go to India and live there," said Dhirendra.

The neighbours kept mum when asked whether the miscreants harassed women. Only a middle-aged man said the girls were assaulted and robbed of their gold ornaments.

A man who had recently married confided that the attackers were furious to find that he had little money to offer. They pushed him out of the hut and closed the door on his face. His wife was inside the hut. His sob told the rest of the story.

Prokriti Ranjan Misra, a senior teacher at Champherat High School in Laxmipur, said miscreants have been demanding Tk 3 lakh from him.

Sushil Majumdar and Ashu Biswas of Champherat village also alleged that terrorists had been asking for money to protect them. "Otherwise, they threatened to torch our houses," said Sushil.

At Gaokhali in Nazirpur thana under Projpur district, the team found the local temple under lock and key. Inside remained an unfinished Mondop with half-made deities of Kartik, Laxmi, Durga, Mahishashur, Saraswati and Ganesh.

Seventy-year old Nikunja Barai in Beltala said, "For the first time in my life, we could not celebrate (Durga) Puja."

Shatagun Mandal, a local farmer of east Sachia, about five kilometres from Gaokhali, was talking about the sleepless nights.

"We stay out at night by turn to guard ourselves. We had received several threats of abductions and toll collection after the election," said Mandal.

In Bhola, our team found damaged image of Goddess Saraswati at a local temple at Ruhita under Ali Nagar union in Sadar thana. The

Hindus there also reported demands for tolls by terrorists.

"We tried to raise money to protect ourselves but we are so poor that hardly anything could be collected to satisfy the terrorists," Satyen, a resident of Ruhita, said.

At Borogaola village under Mollarhat thana in Bagerhat, Sumoti Malakar, 56, and her daughter, Tulu Mistry, 17, wife of Parimal Mistry, cannot forget the atrocities unleashed on them on October 4.

About 15 armed hoodlums swooped on the house where the mother and the daughter were sleeping. Parimal had fled the area fearing reprisal. Sumoti's husband had been missing for the last five years and was feared dead.

At around two in the morning, the miscreants broke into the roadside hut of this impoverished family. They gangraped the mother and the daughter at knife-point for hours.

Both of the victims were too traumatised to talk about the night-mares they had been put through. But Parimal Mistry brought himself to narrate how brutally the victims were tortured and raped.

And, no action was taken against the rapists as the victims failed to recognise them.

Kabul: Northern Alliance

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The ancient city straddles key supply routes between Uzbekistan and the Afghan capital Kabul to the south as well as the highway to Herat, a major city near the border with Iran.

"Yes, Mazar has gone," Akhund said in a brief interview. "The city and its airport are with the opposition."

The Northern Alliance, whose president Burhanuddin Rabbani holds the Afghan seat at the United Nations, said it had also taken Sari-Pol province from the Taliban.

It took just an hour and a half to take Mazar-i-Sharif and rout the Taliban on Friday evening after an assault backed by intense US bombing, said Dostum, an ethnic Uzbek warlord who once ran the city as his fiefdom.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell said Washington was not encouraging the Northern Alliance to try to take the capital.

AFP says, more than 130 Afghan civilians were killed in three villages near the Taliban's southern stronghold of Kandahar after

carpet-bombed Taliban frontline trenches about 25-km north of Kabul. Planes dropped more than 20 bombs on trenches some 200 metres from the opposition-held Bagram airport.

The night before, hundreds of troops, backed by tanks, massed after darkness fell on Friday and commanders said they would advance soon. A Reuters cameraman saw about 800 fighters marching toward the front line along with artillery and four tanks.

The Northern Alliance has said it would not march into Kabul if it gets that far, but would halt outside the city, where it is hated for its internecine battles for power in the early 1990s that killed about 50,000 residents.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell said Washington was not encouraging the Northern Alliance to try to take the capital.

AFP says, more than 130 Afghan civilians were killed in three villages near the Taliban's southern stronghold of Kandahar after

intense US bombing raids, the Afghan Islamic Press informed yesterday.

In Washington, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf appears to have softened his stance on whether the United States should suspend its bombing campaign in Afghanistan through the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which starts next week.

"I have always been saying that preferably the operation has to be short and it would have been much desirable that the operation terminated before Ramadan," Musharraf said in an interview on ABC's "Nightline" news programme on Friday.

"But then I've been saying that strategic objectives have to be achieved. One understands that. But then I'm very conscious that sensitivities of the month of Ramadan must be considered," Musharraf said, according to a transcript provided by ABC News.

Laden threatens to use nukes

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chemical and nuclear weapons," Dawn quoted bin Laden as saying in the interview conducted Thursday near Kabul.

"We have the weapons as a deterrent," the Saudi millionaire said. But bin Laden refused to give details of his claimed arsenal. When asked where he got the weapons from, he responded: "Go to the next question."

The White House declined Friday to directly respond to bin Laden's latest comments but said US officials view such a threat "seriously."

"We've said that we've suspected all along that this organisation has been trying to acquire chemical, biological or nuclear weapons," said spokesman Ken Lisiasus.

The Urdu version of the interview published in Ausaf does not quote bin Laden as saying explicitly that he had nuclear and chemical weapons and would "retort" in case of a US attack.

Instead, it says that "we shall not perish. The US is using chemical weapons against us and it has also decided to use nuclear weapons. But our war will continue."

Mir stood by the English version, saying he was saving the full quote in Urdu for a complete transcript of the interview to run in Ausaf's colour magazine.

He said he asked his questions in English and bin Laden's responses in Arabic were translated back into English by his deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri. Of the Urdu version, Mir said, "It is incomplete. It is not different."

Mir is writing a book on bin Laden and said he has interviewed him in the past. He said he was taken blindfolded in a jeep from Kabul on November 7 to a place from where he

could hear anti-aircraft fire.

Dawn published a picture of Mir with bin Laden, who was wearing a military camouflage jacket over his white robe and had an AK-47 Kalashnikov rifle by his side, but there was no way of determining the exact date of the picture.

Mir said bin Laden arrived for the interview with about a dozen armed bodyguards and al-Zawahiri.

Bin Laden blamed the United States for the attacks on New York and Washington which left more than 5,000 people dead.

"America and its allies are massaging us in Palestine, Chechnya, Kashmir and Iraq. The Muslims have the right to attack America in reprisal."

"The September 11 attacks were not targeted at women and children. The real targets were America's icons of military and economic power," he added.

"The American Congress endorses all government measures and this proves that the entire America is responsible for the atrocities perpetrated against Muslims. The entire America because they elected Congress," he said.

Bin Laden insisted there was no proof of his involvement in the September 11 attacks and said Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf would be "punished" for joining the US-led coalition hunting bin Laden and his al-Qaeda network.

Pakistan "should not have surrendered to the unjustified demands of America. America does not have solid proof against us. It just has some surmises. It is unjust to start bombing on those surmises," he said.

"We will not leave the Pakistani people and the Pakistani territory at

Fish trader shot dead by BCP cadres in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A fish trader was gunned down at Thukra Bazar in Khulna at about 1.30 pm yesterday.

Four people stormed into his fish depot office and shot in his head, leaving him dead on the spot.

The dead was identified as Niranjana Das, 40.

Niranjana's fish depot was among ten other shops looted by BCP cadres on the night of November 7 at Thursha Bazar under Dumuria thana.

Witnesses said the four persons who killed Niranjana yesterday are accused of a case filed under PSA on charge of looting and damaging eleven shops at Thukra Bazar on the night of November 7.

Niranjana left BCP a year back for returning to normal life, police said.

Earlier report says, several people were injured and 13 business establishments looted and ransacked when terrorists wearing black masks went on the rampage on the night of November 7 at Thukra under Dumuria thana.

Of the injured Dulal Saha,

Momindra and Haran were admitted to Dumuria Health Complex with multiple fatal injuries.

The rampage was a sequel to a long standing dispute over possession of a fish gher (enclosure) at Ambhita union by one Abdul Quddus Sarder, 50, of Thukra village.

The terrorists hailing from Ambhita and Ghona unions made several attempts to capture the fish gher in the past, but failed due to resistance by supporters of Quddus Sarder.

Quddus Sarder lodged a complaint with Dumuria thana on November 2. Later a case filed under PSA accusing 12 persons.

The accused stormed into Thukra Bazar wearing black masks. They kidnapped Quddus at arms point and looted 13 shops. They also ransacked the shops and assaulted those who tried to resist them.

The victims told this correspondent that the terrorists are cadres of Miral group of Biplobi Communist Party. It is learnt that BCP armed cadres based at Dumuria are getting ready to retaliate BCP armed cadres responsible for the incident.

A feeble fightback

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Makeshift opener Al-Shahriar was the other casualty for the hosts.

The right-hander, who made four in the first innings, once again disappointed.

He scored just five before a lifting delivery from Friend had him caught in the slips.

The match was scheduled fifteen minutes before the stepped clock of play due to poor light.

Earlier, the visitors, resuming the day on 348 for seven, added 83 runs before being all out after lunch.

Heath Streak contributed eight runs to his overnight score of 57 before becoming the only victim in the morning session. His overnight partner Douglas Marillier struck a career-best 73 with the help of ten boundaries.

But it was 21-year-old Friend who showed his potential as a future all-rounder with a carefully crafted fifty.

Playing in only his fourth Test, Friend followed up his five-wicket blitz in Bangladesh's first innings with a 161-ball 81. His innings included nine fours.

Another young cricketer Mashrafe-bin Murtaza will also recall the day for years to come he claimed four wickets on debut.

The tearaway from Narail justified his Test cap by adding the wickets of Streak and Murphy. The 19-year-old had launched his career in style on Friday by sending back Grant Flower and Stuart Carlisle.

Veteran left-arm spinner Enamul Haque was also rewarded for his persistence. The 35-year-old returned a personal best of three for 74.

With two days to go, Bangladesh, bowled out for 107 in their first

innings, were still 199 runs away from making the visitors bat again.

Murphy was satisfied that his bowlers took two vital wickets in the final session.

"The wicket of Bashar was a bonus. He threw his wicket away when my bowlers were finding it difficult to make a breakthrough. Now I believe that we have come back strongly into the match," he said.

His Bangladesh counterpart Naimur Rahman still thought that the game was far from over.

"There is nothing in the wicket and if we can apply ourselves in batting, the match can still be saved," Naimur said.

Titas Gas

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Hossain, Secretary Akmal Hossain, experts from the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) and senior officials of Petrobangla were present in the presentation ceremony at the PM's office.

The stocktaking meeting on oil and gas sector also discussed alternatives for ensuring optimum economic and financial benefit from natural gas alongside issues of outstanding bills and system loss of Titas.

In order to update a figure of the country's gas reserves, the meeting also decided to finalise steps to utilise help of Bangladeshi experts instead of relying totally on the figures provided by the foreign companies.

International oil companies who struck gas and are seeking its export have given certain figures while a finding by US geological survey has put the "mean number of gas reserve" in the country at 32.1 TCF.

The session also discussed the present situation, diversified use, future prospects and potential of the country's mineral resources.

Importance was laid on legal procedures of to turn Bangladesh Petroleum Institute into an independent body to provide training, research facilities and perform development activities in the sector.

Various functions of Petrobangla, since its inception, were also discussed. Matters of mining Barapukuria coal and Maddyapara hard rock also came up during the meeting.

Anti-terrorism law

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those who opposed the POTO would not be helping national interests.

This, political observers say, is aimed at drawing the electoral battle lines as well as sending out a blunt message to the Congress-led opposition which has severely attacked the new anti-terrorism measure terming it "draconian".

Much space of the political resolution adopted at the Amritsar meeting of the BJP national executive is dedicated to the terrorism issue and the POTO. The message to party cadres is clear: fan out across the country and raise the political temperature on the terrorism issue and