

Asian highway: Dhaka proposes Ctg-Myanmar route

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has proposed to ESCAP a new route in the Bangladesh portion of the proposed Asian highway to connect Chittagong with Myanmar. Communications Minister Nazmul Huda told BBC yesterday.

He however said, "A final decision on the proposed route is yet to be taken by the government though it is important for us and for our commerce..."

We also have to see if the ESCAP-proposed route (through Bangladesh) is a threat to our national security."

But Bangladesh's priority is to build relations with ASEAN countries by linking Chittagong with Yangon (in Myanmar) through Cox's Bazar through the proposed highway, he added.

ESCAP is working on a plan to build a 65,000-kilometer highway linking South and Southeast Asian countries.

The ESCAP proposed that the highway in its Bangladesh part would cross through Tamabil border in Sylhet, Benapol in Jessore and Banglabandha in Panchchagar. But experts say this will put our national security at risk.

They however say the route of the proposed highway will depend on political considerations instead of economic and commercial matters, which would be the main barrier in its construction.

Mizoram, Tripura seek to use Bangladesh waterways

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The state governments of Tripura and Mizoram of India have sought permission to use waterways of Bangladesh for transportation of goods from the two states through Bangladesh.

Industry and Commerce Minister of Tripura Pabitra Kar yesterday told BBC that he had made a proposal for this to the shipping minister of Bangladesh recently.

Kar said if the proposal is accepted, transport cost of goods from Tripura would reduce greatly.

At present, transport of goods to Assam from Kolkata using Bangladesh waterways is allowed.

Mizoram is seeking permission to use the river Karnaphuli for transport of goods through Bangladesh.

The chief minister of Mizoram said if they are permitted to use the river, it would benefit his state as well as Bangladesh.

Sajal murder Former DCC commissioner Sadeq Khan sent to jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Former DCC ward commissioner Mohammad Sadeq Khan, an accused in Sajal Chowdhury murder case, was sent to the Dhaka Central Jail by the Metropolitan Session Judge's Court yesterday.

Judge Ahmed Jamil Mostafa rejected the bail petition submitted by the defence lawyers on behalf of the accused.

Sadeq Khan along with his lawyers surrendered before the court and sought bail. The prosecution side opposed the bail petition.

The court also fixed January 20 for appearance of the accused.

Investigation officer (IO) of the case submitted a charge sheet against former Awami League lawmaker Alhaj Mockbul Hossain and 12 others on May 2 this year.

Sajal, a BNP activist, was gunned down near the Science Laboratory in the city by armed men from a convoy allegedly led by Mockbul Hossain during an opposition-called hartal on February 9, 1999.

Dhanmondi police recorded a murder case in this connection.

In the FIR, it was stated that Sajal was shot dead in a clash involving activists of BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and the then ruling Awami League.

Later, victim's father filed a

BSCIC ditches old ways Industrial park instead of industrial estates

RAFIQ HASAN

The Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) plans 'modern industrial parks' on the basis of entrepreneurs' demand, forsaking the concept of traditional industrial estates.

"We have changed our concept because the industrial estates set up earlier at district level did not contribute to industrialisation as desired," BSCIC Chairman MA Mannan told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said now their main target is to facilitate setting up of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), instead of small and cottage industries as was done earlier in BSCIC estates.

The parks will be built at suitable places where entrepreneurs can collect raw materials and run their business smoothly.

Political pressure or geographical location will not be considered as was done in setting up of industrial estates earlier, he added.

According to sources, state-owned BSCIC is conducting a feasibility study for a large industrial park along the Dhaka-Chittagong highway near Dhaka. Its area will be between 400 and 200 acres.

Advertisements have been made through national newspapers seeking application from entrepreneurs for plots and letters are being sent to chamber bodies and business organisations to assess their requirements and demand. The plots will be distributed on first-come-first-serve basis, they said.

Bangladesh missions in Washington, London and Rome will also be informed so that overseas Bangladeshis can apply for plots.

They said BSCIC will acquire lands, develop plots and allot those to entrepreneurs at actual costs.

No subsidy will be provided. Earlier, government provided 20 to 50 per cent subsidy in allotting plots in industrial estates.

Construction of the proposed industrial park along the Dhaka-Chittagong highway near Dhaka will be completed within five years.

"We are getting good response from the business community regarding our new industrial park," the BSCIC chairman said.

More projects will be taken if this becomes a success.

At present, BSCIC has hardly any vacant plot in industrial estates near Dhaka and Chittagong cities where the demand is high.

BSCIC is going to undertake such projects as intending entrepreneurs in purchasing lands often find those disputed and also face extortion by local hoodlums.

"If the government acquires land and develops it, entrepreneurs will not face any such problem and the land will be much cheaper," the BSCIC chairman said.

Size of industrial plots will be decided on the basis of requirement of entrepreneurs. All logistic support including power, gas, water, telephone and communication facilities will be provided in the industrial park.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

Kolkata takes steps to end criminal crossover

SAKYASEN MITRA, Kolkata

The West Bengal government has made it mandatory for anyone in the state who rents out a flat to a Bangladesh national to immediately notify the local police about it. Similarly, hotels have been asked to report to the police whenever a Bangladeshi checks in.

The police will then go to the tenants or boarders and verify the papers. The West Bengal police yesterday announced the decision through a notification carried by local newspapers.

Chief of the Detective Department of Kolkata police Soumen Mitra yesterday said, "It's not that we are against Bangladeshis. But criminals from that side of the border have an

advantage of speaking the same language. As a result, it is very difficult to track them down."

The West Bengal government is taking some special steps to stop the entrance of criminals from Bangladesh. The Indian government along with the state government has also decided to set up a special commando force to curb the influx of Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) agents 'in the garb of Bangladeshis into India'. This special commando force will be employed along the international border that separates the Indian state of West Bengal from Bangladesh.

The decision was taken at a meeting between West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadev Bhattacharya and Indian Deputy

Prime Minister and Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani in New Delhi yesterday.

The force will be trained at the elite commando training school in Hyderabad and the central government will bear cost of the training.

The meeting also decided that a 200-page report written by the West Bengal government on the ISI activities in West Bengal 'with the help of Bangladeshi militant groups' would also be submitted to the Bangladesh government. New Delhi would then closely watch Dhaka's actions on the basis of the report.

In Kolkata, raids at various places continued also yesterday. Police picked up seven Bangladeshis who

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Patriotism test for civil servants

AFP, Harare

The Zimbabwe government wants to make all civil servants sit tests to assess their patriotism if they want to keep their jobs, the state-run Herald reported yesterday.

Those who "are found wanting" will be sent for training and could lose their jobs, the newspaper quoted Public Service Commission (PSC) secretary Ray Ndhlukula as saying.

The tests would be introduced in January.

President Robert Mugabe hit out at civil servants earlier this year and the government has introduced a national youth service programme which is

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia makes a point during yesterday's meeting with the secretaries of the government at her Bangladesh Secretariat office.

Community clinics in cold waters

Plans to make union health centres functional

NAIMUL HAQ

In a major policy shift in the health sector, the government plans to stop running the community clinics and instead make the Union Health and Family Welfare Centres (UHFWC) fully functional.

Explaining the policy shift, the government said the UHFWCs are "in fact the most basic local level static service delivery unit and also the focal point of satellite clinics and EPI (expanded programme for immunisation) outreach centres."

Atop official said the government

wants to go for setting up more UHFWCs and strengthening the existing ones. It seeks to discontinue operation of the community clinics (CC) and not to use those as planned in the Health and Population Sector Programme (HPSP).

"The change is most significant and it would be brought about after the current five-year HPSP expires in July next."

In its Conceptual Framework document prepared for the three years following expiry of the HPSP, the government said the CCs were

established "without ensuring community involvement and influenced in many cases by political considerations. Most of them were found less productive."

However, the existing CCs would be run by non-government organisations (NGOs) and the USAID and the DFID would be funding NGOs to run 12 CCs under a pilot projects.

Meanwhile, the government has "virtually abandoned" scheduled construction of about 2000 CCs in the next one year or so.

Each two-room tin-shed com

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7



Curious people look at pulled-down structures on the foreshore of the Buriganga near the city's Muslimbagh area yesterday, the fourth day of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) anti-encroachment drive.

CID probing Tinni murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) took over the sensational Tinni murder case yesterday and immediately started investigating it.

Keraniganj police handed over the case to the CID as they failed to make any headway in its probe into the killing of the model and actress, sources said.

A CID team yesterday visited the Buriganga Bridge from where Keraniganj police had recovered Tinni's body on November 16.

Unidentified elements killed Syeda Tania Mahbub Tinni by hitting on her head and left the body under the bridge. The body was kept at the Keraniganj Police Station for four days as none went there to claim it.

Later, seeing her photograph in a daily, Tinni's uncle and father-in-law identified the body. Her husband Safakat Hossain alias Piyal also went to the police station and identified the body.

Piyal later surrendered to police and was shown arrested. He was sent to jail on expiry of remand for interrogation.

Police suspect that Jatiya Party (Ershad) lawmaker Golam Faruk Ovi is involved in the killing. He was a 'close friend' of Tinni, they say.

Row over terror link lends extra edge to Hasina's India visit

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina's five-day visit is viewed in the backdrop of rough edges in relations between New Delhi and Dhaka developed recently over trading of charges on the 'presence' of terrorist camps in Bangladesh.

Although the visit is labelled 'private', it is expected to begin November 26, is likely to feature meetings with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha and National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra.

According to official sources, Hasina will get all the strapping of welcome due to a leader of the opposition during her stay in India.

The bad blood, which has crept into the Indo-Bangla relations with New Delhi going public about the charge that Dhaka is not taking enough action against terrorists in

Bangladesh, has lent more-than-usual significance to her visit.

It all started soon after the annual meeting between the chiefs of the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) here last month.

The BSF chief Ajay Raj Sharma handed over a list of terrorist training camps to his BDR counterpart who, however, denied the existence of any such installations.

Then came Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna Advani's allegation about presence of al-Qaida activists in Bangladesh, triggering strong protests from Dhaka. Advani himself has reacted sharply to Dhaka's response to his statement.

According to diplomatic sources, when Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Manilal Tripathi was called by Foreign Secretary Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury in Dhaka recently, he conveyed New Delhi's concern that its worries

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

Miss World organisers finally flee Nigeria

AFP, Kaduna

Riots raged on in the northern Nigerian city Kaduna yesterday after violence there forced beauty pageant organisers to abandon plans to stage Miss World in Nigeria.

Fighting which began as protest by Muslim youths against a newspaper article on the pageant has now degenerated into a bloody street war between Muslims and Christians, witnesses say.

An AFP journalist was forced to join around a 1,000 refugees hiding in the Kronenbourg brewery in the south of the city near the main road to Abuja, protected by troops and an armoured car.

"We had to run for our lives. They came to my house in two cars and

tried to burn it. We really don't know what is happening," 20-year-old Julie Adabo told the wire service.

Another woman said that a gang came to kill her after burning her home and only let her live when she lied and claimed to be a Muslim. One man said he had seen his brother cut down before him.

As she spoke, gunfire could be heard from the Trikania district around the plant and several buildings could be seen in flames.

Rioting in Kaduna on Thursday claimed at least 105 lives. Many more are since thought to have perished.

"Fighting continued until 11.30 pm (local time) in this area. It started again at 6.30 am. We hear gunfire permanently," said the plant's

French manager Regis Bouffartigue.

"The soldiers shoot and the demonstrators return fire. According to the soldiers, the demonstrators even have AK47s (assault rifles)," he said.

Miss World's organisers announced early yesterday that they would quit Nigeria and seek to hold the December 7 ceremony, which was set for the Nigerian capital Abuja, in London instead.

Trouble erupted in Kaduna on Wednesday when Muslim youths, incensed by an article on the pageant, burned down a local newspaper office.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Road mishap in India One of 4 critically injured JU students dies

JU CORRESPONDENT

One of the four students of Jahangirnagar University, who were critically injured in Friday's road accident in Chandigarh, capital of Hariyana state of India, died yesterday.

Shamima Yasmin Munni succumbed to her injuries at PGI Hospital in Chandigarh.

The accident occurred when a jeep carrying seven students and a teacher of Archaeology department of the university hit a lorry parked on a highway at Karnal at about 2-30 am on Friday, injuring all boarding it.

They were rushed to nearby Karnal Government Hospital where doctors declared Hosne Ara, an Associate Professor of the depart

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

Road accidents kill 3 in city, 2 in Sirajganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least five people were killed and 15 others injured in separate road accidents in the capital city and Sirajganj district yesterday and Friday night.

Of them, three were killed in the city while the rest two in Sirajganj.

In the city, Zaed, a minor boy was killed when a bus hit him at Kazipara bus stand at around 11 am yesterday.

Police recovered the body and sent it to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy. Police also seized the killer bus, but the driver managed to flee.

A middle-aged woman was seriously injured in a road accident in front of BG Press in Tejgaon Industrial area yesterday morning. She succumbed to her injuries on way to the DMCH.

The victim was identified as Akhter Banu, 45.

A rickshawpuller was killed under the wheels of a truck at Kalyanpur in front of Bangladesh Betar Colony while he was returning home at Mohammadpur at about

9 pm on Friday night. Identity of the victim could not be known.

Three separate cases were filed with respective police stations in this connection.

Our Sirajganj Correspondent reports: Two people were killed and 15 others injured, six of them seriously, in two separate road accidents in the district yesterday.

The victims were identified as Sabur Ali alias Sabur of village Morgram under Dhupchachia upazila in Bogra district and Kamrul Islam, son of late Yakub Ali of village Sayadhanga Uttarpara under Sirajganj Sadar Upazila.

The first accident occurred when Bogra bound truck with day labourers aboard collided with Dhaka bound bus on the Dhaka-Bogra highway at around 3 am.

The seriously injured people were admitted to Sirajganj General Hospital.

Police seized the truck, but drivers and helpers managed to flee.

The another accident occurred at 4:30 pm on New

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8