

ECNEC approves 10 projects worth Tk 14,468 crore

UNB, Dhaka

Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) yesterday approved 10 development projects involving over Tk 14,468.39 crore, including Tk 4,904.20 crore in project aid.

The projects include a Tk 11,419.80 crore scheme, including Tk 4,425.40 crore in project aid, for the revised Programme Implementation Plan (PIP) of Health and Population Sector Programme (HPSP) of the Health and Family Welfare Ministry.

The approval came from a meeting of the ECNEC at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar held with the Prime Minister and ECNEC chairperson Khaleda

Zia in the chair.

Nine other approved projects are Ultra High Temperature (UHT) Treated Milk Plant at the factories of Milk Vita at Baghabari and Dhaka, Rural Infrastructure Development Project, Rural Development Project-20: Greater Comilla Infrastructure Project of Local Government Division, Operation Capability Strengthening Project and Nalika-Bogra Gas Transmission Line Construction Project of Energy and Mineral Resources Division, Deep Tubewell project in Barendra Region of Agriculture Ministry, three women's polytechnics at the divisional HQs of the Education Ministry, reconstruction and renovation of government primary schools

project of the Primary and Mass Education Department, and expansion of power distribution system project of the Power division.

Besides, the meeting also approved in principle six development projects, which will be implemented from the revenue budget instead of the annual development programme (ADP).

The projects are strengthening of the Coastguard, Infrastructure development of Benapole customs station, integrated 'Ufsi' (HYV) jute and jute seed production, goat development for poverty eradication, Child Development Programme and implementation of the UN Sea Law Convention 1982.



PHOTO: PID
Prime Minister Khaleda Zia presides over a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council at the NEC in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar yesterday.

AL points finger

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convinced them to point their finger at the state minister, who is the member of parliament (MP) from Lalpur, Natore.

Jalil recalled the killing of the AL's student front leader Moazzem Haq in early 2002 at Natore allegedly by BNP-backed criminals, who, he claimed, were patronised by Rahman.

The AL general secretary went on to claim that the murder case was withdrawn at the influence of Rahman and Mamta Uddin Ahmed made himself an enemy of those 'criminals' and their godfather by protesting it.

In support of his claim, Jalil presented newsmen with copies of petition made by the alleged criminals, appealing to the home minister to withdraw the case terming themselves workers of Rahman. And, the case was withdrawn subsequently, Jalil said meaningfully.

When contacted, Rahman refuted all the allegations and said, "It's the dirty trend of Awami League politics to blame someone who did not commit the crime. I haven't had any association with criminals in my

whole political career."

He also advocated for judicial inquiry, if required. "Being the local MP, I will do whatever I can to help find the culprits."

The AL accusation followed a day after relatives of Mamta accused Rahman of the killing.

Advocate Abul Kalam Azad, also the organising secretary of the district AL, had alleged that BNP's hit men killed his brother at the instruction of their high command.

The AL general secretary meanwhile alleged that the BNP-led alliance government has so far withdrawn 53,405 cases on political consideration. "The way the government is releasing accused in various cases, it is putting the life of our leaders and workers has come under serious threat," he said.

Acting AL President Zillur Rahman, party chief Sheikh Hasina's Political Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury, senior AL leaders including Tofail Ahmed, Sajeda Chowdhury, Matia Chowdhury, Kazi Zafurullah, Suranjit Sengupta, Obaidul Kader, Bir Bahadur, Mahmudur Rahman Manna and Abdul Mannan were also present at the briefing.

Arms looting

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report the fact that the two ansars were former PBCP cadres and did not relinquish their arms during the surrender.

The report also blamed Ansar Commander Abdus Salam for being negligent in safeguarding the arms and ammunition that were provided for use by his platoon to protect the properties of the jute mill.

Both men have been absconding since the incident.

The report said that four out of 32 Ansars of the camp at Daulatpur Jute Mill were on leave on the night of April 24.

The probe report contains some other observations relating to non-cooperation of police in providing the Ansars with moral and logistic supports to carry out their duties effectively.

The Khulna Metropolitan Police has so far failed to recover any of the arms and ammunition or arrest their looters despite frequent combing operations.

Dacoity in N'ganj

BSS, Narayanganj

Armed dacoits looted cash and gold ornaments worth Tk 8 lakh from a house at Khanpur Kazipara in the town in the early hours of yesterday.

According to police and family sources, a group of 10 to 12 dacoits equipped with pipe-guns, pistol and knives entered the house of late Nur Hossain Bhuiyan on the first floor of a two-storey building through the window.

The robbers tied the inmates of the house at gunpoint and looted one lakh 25 thousand in cash and gold ornaments weighing about 75 tolas.

A case has been registered, but none was arrested.

Protect Singha Bari

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Chouhatta area.

The speakers alleged that the members of joint families, who were given lease by the authority, had been in possession of the property since 1974. The government rents for the lease is also clear up to 2001. Since then they made several attempts to deposit the rent, but the local administration refused to receive it every time, they alleged.

And then the deputy commissioner recently issued allotment of the said land and property to someone else without giving any prior notice to the family in possession. Members of the family are now feeling highly unsecured.

They also alleged that several such attempts were made by the land grabbers in the past, producing fake documents.

Some people produced documents in the name of a non-existing institution in 1984 and another attempt was taken using some forged documents in favour of some owners, who had died long ago. In 1995, such attempts were foiled when the then prime minister and the citizen's group weighed in.

The speakers demanded the recently issued illegal lease order by the deputy commissioner be cancelled immediately and that the inhabitants be allowed to continue living there.

Govinda Narayan Singha Majumder was the owner of the historic house known as "Singha Bari". Dignitaries like Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam and others had visited the house. Some of his successors went to India after the partition in 1947 while some others stayed back. The absentees' share was declared enemy property in the 1973. In accordance with the government provision, the abandoned portion was leased out to the other co-sharers in 1970s. Since

then they have been in the possession of the property.

A memorandum to press the historically important 'Singha Bari' was also handed over to the DC Saturday. Former vice-chancellor of the Shahjalal University of Science and Technology Professor Mohammad Habibur Rahman, Sylhet District Bar Association President Abdul Hai Khan and General Secretary EU Shahidul Islam along with others handed over the memo.

Those who addressed the rally include former Chairman of Sylhet Municipality AFM Kamal, city BNP Secretary Nasir Hossain, City AL Secretary Abdul Khalique Mayon, former MP Syeda Zeabunnesa Haque, city Ward Commissioner Jamal Uddin, Sylhet District Bar Association Secretary EU Shahidul Islam, cultural activist Nizam Uddin Lashkar and district JSD Secretary Lokman Ahmed, who is also the Secretary of the Rakhsa committee.

Sony's killers

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Khan Mukhi and five others continue eluding law enforcers.

Expressing disappointment at the failure to arrest the killers, Sony's mother Dilara Begum demanded exemplary punishment so that no one dies like Sony.

Sony's father Habibur Rahman Bhuiyan urged the prime minister and all socio-cultural, political and student organisations to raise their voices against violence.

When the students marched to the Prime Minister's Office, police stopped them in front of the Central Public Library.

However, police later escorted a three-member team to submit the memorandum to the prime minister.

Corruption cases

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accusing them of misuse of power which caused a loss of Tk 1,247 crore of public money.

In the case, the BAC official charged that the royalty was fixed at Tk 1,200 per hour for the ETV programmes within the telecast time of the Bangladesh Television (BTV), while Tk 1,800 per hour was fixed beyond the telecast time of the BTV at a meeting chaired by the then finance secretary on January 27, 1999.

The finance ministry informed it to the ETV chairman through a letter on February 16, 1999 but the ETV management informed the former finance minister that they were unable to pay the amount.

The ETV management did not pay Tk 1,200 per hour from March 8 to August 29, 2002, as charge to the BTV which caused loss of Tk 1,247 crore of public money.

In another case, former state minister for information Prof Abu Sayeed, former information secretary M Akmal Hossain and former chairman of the ETV AS Mahmud were charged with irregularities in the licensing process of the ETV, which did not participate in the tender within the stipulated time.

Violating the rules of the Private Television Channel and Management Policy 1998, the then four-member technical evaluation committee of the Ministry of Information in connivance with Prof Abu Sayeed, Akmal Hossain and AS Mahmud evaluated the ETV proposal responsive instead of non-responsive, according to the case.

Following the evaluation, they also left out the Multimedia Transport Consultant Limited which was earlier proved technically responsive by the technical evaluation committee, it said.

Besides, the BAC also accused the former secretary of destroying the necessary documents including the changed evaluation report of the committee which was a punishable offence under the Bangladesh Penal Code of 201.

Flag vessel

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Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Ocean Going Ship Owners Association (BOGSOA) is opposing the government move to amend the ordinance, saying it would bring the whole shipping business under the control of a few foreign companies.

"If the ordinance is amended according to the shipping ministry's proposal, the local shipping companies (ocean-going) will not survive," said Sayeed Hossain Chowdhury, chairman of BOGSOA.

The foreign currency reserves will face serious pressure as Tk 240 crore will have to be paid annually in cargo freight.

Moreover, investment to the tune of Tk 400 crore in the sector would also be at risk, Chowdhury added.

Natore hartal

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Mamta was stabbed to death by masked assailants at Darapara in Lalpur upazila on Friday night.

Sayed Nazrul Islam, superintendent of Natore police, said his force was examining the evidence to find out the clues to the crime.

They are examining leads whether the killing stemmed from inter-party rivalry or intra-party conflict, he said.

Police yesterday sought a seven-day remand of BNP activist Arif Hossain at a magistrate's court for interrogating him and the court will hear the plea today.

Police claimed that primary investigation showed his involvement in the crime.

Abul Kalam Azad, brother of the victim and the district AL organising secretary, filed a case accusing 12 people.

He alleged a top local BNP leader hired the goons to kill his rival.

Local lawmaker and State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman Patil denied the allegations.

"I am rather shocked and upset at the death of the freedom fighter (Mamta) and asked everyone concerned to identify and arrest the killers," he said.

Deputy Minister for Land Ruhul Kuddus Talukdar claimed that the killing was a result of intra-party conflict.

But Hanif dismissed the charge. "Yes we have grouping in the party, but that cannot lead to killing," he said.

Robbers loot goods worth Tk 10 lakh in Chittagong

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Robbers looted goods and valuables worth over Tk 10 lakh and injured eight people including a woman in Banskhali and Rangunia upazila at around mid-night.

About 22 robbers attacked two houses at Napura Mirpara of Puinchhuri union under Banskhali upazila during the downpour Saturday evening, police said.

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One of Savar robbers beaten to death