

Construction of 3rd Karnaphuli bridge okayed

UNB, Dhaka

The Cabinet Committee on Purchase at a meeting yesterday approved seven projects, including construction of the 3rd Karnaphuli Bridge in Chittagong.

Chaired by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, the meeting decided to award the construction work of the bridge involving Tk 336.30 crore to China Major Bridge Company.

Emerging from the meeting, Saifur told reporters the construction work on the bridge will begin soon. "We're hopeful that the work will begin within 3 to 4 months," he said.

The committee approved a separate proposal for appointing a consultant for supervising the 3rd Karnaphuli Bridge.

Residents of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar have long been demanding construction of the bridge over the Karnaphuli to facilitate their movement between the two districts.

The committee also selected Czech Republic-based Skodaxport Company for supply, installation and commissioning of gas booster and gas compressor, including civil work at 100MW Haripur Power Plant, under a renovation and modernisation programme.

The other approved projects are appointment of a consultant for the development of road network across the country, appointment of another consultant for supervision of the 3rd Buriganga Bridge and 2nd Shitalakha Bridge, appointment of a consultant for supervising the Chittagong Port Facilitation Project and appointment of a consultant for the improvement of secondary school education.

ICFM MEET Morshed flies to Azerbaijan tomorrow

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan leaves Dhaka for Azerbaijan tomorrow to attend the 33rd Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) to be held in Baku June 19-21 against the backdrop of major developments in the Muslim world.

Foreign ministry sources said this session of the ICFM bears a special significance as it will do the spadework for the forthcoming Islamic summit, scheduled to be held in Senegal later this year with a number of important issues on the agenda.

Seminar on Bangladesh elections to be held in UK

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A seminar on "The elections in Bangladesh: Security, human rights and a level-playing field" will be held at the King's College, University of London, in the UK on July 15, said press release issued by Lord Avebury, vice-chair of UK Human Rights Parliamentary Group.

Lord Avebury with Jeremy Corbyn MP will co-chair the seminar, organised by Liberation and International Bangladesh Foundation, in collaboration with London-based human rights organisations, peers, MPs, MEPs, academics and faith leaders.

In the press release, Lord Avebury expressed concern over the human rights violations in Bangladesh, particularly the religious extremism, harassment and persecution of religious minorities, and failure to create the conditions for free and fair elections.

"Equally, the neutrality of the caretaker government and the Electoral Commission must be achieved if there is to be a level-playing field," he added.

Concern over gang rape of garment worker

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Karmajibi Nari expressed deep concern over the incident of gang rape of an employee of Syntex BD Limited at Savar on Wednesday.

A group of people, led by supervisor of the garment factory at Jamgara area of Ashulia, sexually abused the female garment worker.

Karmajibi Nari President Shirin Akhter and General Secretary Sharmin Kabir in a statement demanded exemplary punishment to the culprits involved in the incident. They said psychological and physical torture on women and women workers has alarmingly been increasing day by day.

They urged the authorities concerned to take necessary steps immediately to end the continuous oppression and violence against the female garment workers.

Ensure highest security to VVIPs

Khaleda asks SSF

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday asked the SSF to ensure highest security to the VVIPs keeping in mind the necessity of their contact with the people.

She said the coming days will be more challenging for SSF with the changed situation.

Khaleda, also in-charge of Defence Ministry, said this while she was addressing a function marking the 20th founding anniversary of the SSF at the newly built SSF officers' mess-house.

She said on one hand every SSF member will have to be intelligent, creative, innovative, efficient and tactful in carrying out their duties and on the other they will have to

be firm but kind and gentle.

She said the SSF members have to remember that the responsibility of maintaining security is not only a routine work, but also a "routine plus". "This plus part is bringing new

requirement and demand every moment and that will have to be fulfilled," she told the SSF officers at the function.

She said ensuring security is a multidimensional effort and the SSF members, as security personnel, are engaged in maintaining the security of the distinctively important persons. "So you will have to be well-disciplined and have the high qualities of character."

"Your faithfulness, firmness of character and sincerity in perform-

ing duties will have to be beyond

question," she said, adding that they will always have to remain vigilant and ready to face any emergency and for that they need regular training, perseverance and practice.

SSF Director General Maj Gen Sayed Fatemi Ahmed Roomy in his address of welcome said women will be included in SSF soon as part of development of the force and a process in this regard is underway.

Earlier, Khaleda inaugurated the SSF officers' mess by unveiling its plaque on the north side of PM's Relief Godown at Airport Road at Tejgaon near the old airport.

The four-storied mess building, with north, south and middle blocks, was built on 1.69 acres of land at a cost of Tk 10.40 crore.



Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman, former chief advisor of the caretaker government, inaugurates a 15-day book festival titled 'Oliya Boi Utsab' at Etcetera showroom at Gulshan in the city yesterday.

Police need to change their mindset: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said all members of the police force need to change their mindset, with the social changes taking place due to globalisation.

"Society has been undergoing many changes due to the influence of globalisation, spread of education and technology, and socio-economic development," she said at a function of the police.

The function was organised on the occasion of laying the foundation stone of a new building of DMP Headquarters on its premises at the city's Mintu Road.

Referring to her government's success in improving law and order situation and ensuring public security, Khaleda said the number of thanas in Dhaka City would be increased to 51 from 28 gradually.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, Housing Minister Mirza Abbas, State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar and IGP Md Abdul Quyum also spoke.

17 top posts held by officials on contract

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A number of top posts in important offices of the government, including Prime Minister's Office, cabinet division and different ministries, are held by officials appointed on contract.

At least 15 officials have been working on contract at the secretary level while two others at additional secretary level, said Aminul Haq, in-charge of the establishment ministry with regard to parliamentary affairs, in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

He also placed a list of the officials while replying to a question from BNP lawmaker Rustam Ali Farazi.

The list shows that Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister's Office Dr Kamal Uddin Siddiqui and Secretary of the office Khandaker Shahidul Islam are appointed on contract.

Khairuzzaman, chairman of the National Board of Revenue (NBR), Akhter Hossain Khan, secretary of the Planning Division, and Siddiqur Rahman Chowdhury, Secretary of the finance division, are also on the list. These posts are under the finance ministry.

Besides, Cabinet Secretary ASM Abdul Halim, Communications Secretary Mohammad Shafiqul Islam, Law Secretary Md Alauddin Sarder, Shipping Secretary Rafiqul Islam, Foreign Secretary Hemayet Uddin, Defence Secretary Mahmud Hasan Mansur, Housing and Public Works Secretary Iqbal

Uddin Chowdhury and Acting Secretary to the labour and employment ministry Syed Sujauddin Ahmed have been working on contract.

Alternative Executive Director of the World Bank Zakir Ahmed Khan and Ambassador Muhammad Abul Kashem are also appointed on contract.

The two officials appointed on contract at the additional secretary level are Vice-Chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission AMM Reza-e-Rabbi and Press Secretary to the Prime Minister's Office Tajul Islam.

Kitchen market gutted in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A kitchen market of a shopping complex was gutted in a fire at Uttara in the city yesterday.

Originating from an electrical short circuit at the underground kitchen market of Kushal Centre at Sector No. 3 of Uttara at about 2:30pm, the fire immediately engulfed the shops.

The fire fighters extinguished the fire after a struggle for more than an hour at 4:25pm.

The fire damaged huge kitchen materials and gutted six hardware and stationary shops.

Fire Service and Civil Defence officials estimated the loss at about Tk 10.17 lakh in the fire.

Roundtable

Islamic Economics Research Bureau organises a roundtable on the proposed national budget 2006-07. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 9.30am.

Prize giving ceremony

The prize giving ceremony of daylong debate competition on disaster management affairs will be held. Venue: BGS Administration Academy, Shahbagh. Time: 3.30pm.

Fruits exhibition

A three-day national fruits exhibition, organised by the Agricultural Extension Department, will be inaugurated. Venue: Krishibid Institution Bangladesh, Farmgate. Time: 3.00pm.

Healthcare camp

A healthcare camp on breast cancer and hypertension will be inaugurated. Venue: YWCA Office, Green Road. Time: 9.00am.

Seminar

Green University organises a seminar on 'Entrepreneurship and small business administration in the USA and Bangladesh'. Venue: Islam Auditorium, New Eskaton. Time: 10.00am.

Meeting

A meeting of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall Alumni Association will be held. Venue: Commerce faculty conference room of Dhaka University. Time: 3.30pm.

Discussion

A discussion on holy Hajj will be held with audio-visual presentation. Venue: Spectra Convention Centre, Gulshan-1. Time: 4.30pm.

Rally

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon organises a rally demanding more playgrounds in the city. Venue: In front of the Institute of Fine Arts, Shahbagh. Time: 10.30am.

Qulkhwani

Qulkhwani of Begum Faizunnisa (Kachi), daughter of late Khan Shaheb Sayeduddin Ahmed of Bharukati Miahbari, Jhalakati and a former librarian and Assistant Superintendent of Dhaka Eden College Hostel, will be held today after Asr prayers at Embassy Garden, 12 Dutabash Road, Baridhara in the city, says a press release.

Friends, relatives and admirers are requested to attend the qulkhwani.

Eviction notice on Khaled Mosharraf's wife Sector commanders to exchange views tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sector commanders and Liberation War heroes will exchange views at a press conference in the city tomorrow with regard to a notice served by the government to vacate the house allotted to the wife of 'K' Force commander Brig. Gen. Khaled Mosharraf Bir Uttam.

They will also take a decision on their next course of action in this regard at the press conference beginning at 4:00pm at the National Press Club.

The house at NW(E) 20, Road # 59, Gulshan was allotted to Salma Khaled in 1979 during the tenure of President Ziaur Rahman.

The Directorate of Government Accommodation issued the eviction notice in November last year, saying that the allotment has been cancelled for the sake of 'public interest'.

In October 2004, Rajuk auctioned off the house to two bidders without informing Salma Khaled.

After the 60-year-old widow of Brig. Gen. Khaled Mosharraf filed a writ petition, the High Court issued a rule on November 14 last year staying the operation of the eviction order and asked the government to explain why the cancellation of allotment should not be declared illegal.

When Salma came to know about the auction of the house, she filed a separate petition challenging the Rajuk's involvement and questioning its authority to sell the house.

On March 12, the court modified its previous rule making Rajuk a party in the writ and directed all concerned to maintain the status quo.

Khaled Mosharraf, also commander of Sector-2 during the Liberation War, was killed in November 1975 military unrest that brought Ziaur Rahman to the limelight.

Death anniversary

Today is the 28th death anniversary of Nawab Khawja Ahsanullah, youngest son of Nawab Sir Salimullah, says a press release.

On the occasion, Bazar mazar at 10.00am and doa mahfil will be held at his mazar at 4.00pm and at Sir Salimullah Muslim Orphanage after Maghrib prayers.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to attend the doa mahfil.

Mahmudul Hoque

Today is the eighth death anniversary of Mahmudul Hoque Chowdhury, senior sub-editor of the Bangladesh Observer, says a press release.

Milad mahfil and Quorankhawmi will be held at his village home at Matigodha in Chhagalnaiya, Feni, on the occasion.

His family members have requested all to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Chehlum

Chehlum of Salma Amin, wife of Development Construction Limited (DCL) Managing Director Engineer Nurul Amin, will be held today, says a press release.

Salma passed away at the Kornatok Nephrology and Transplant Institute at Bangalore in India on May 5.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at her residence at Kapatia in Gazipur. Foodstuff will be distributed at different madrasas and orphanages after Juma prayers.

Prince Murtaza Ali Khan

Chehlum of Prince Murtaza Ali Khan, a prominent social worker and politician, will be held at Kajla in Mymensingh after Juma prayers today, says a press release.

Milad mahfil and Quorankhawmi will be held on the occasion.

Relatives, well-wishers and friends have been requested to attend the milad.

Murtaza Ali was awarded the title 'Prince' by the British Raj for his benevolent activities like setting up mosques and madrasas.

'Budget anti-people'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB), Jatiya Oikya Mancha and Bangladesh Tarikat Federation at a rally yesterday rejected the proposed budget for 2006-07 fiscal, terming it 'anti-people'.

They also strongly condemned the ruling alliance for using the law enforcers to foil the opposition political parties' peaceful movement.

The budget did not reflect the hopes and aspirations of the people as the government has only imposed taxes through this budget, said BDB General Secretary Maj. (ret.) Abdul Mannan at the rally held in front of the Matsya Bhabhan at Segunbagicha in the city.

Transport strike called off

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The transport owners and workers yesterday called off their June 18-19 countrywide strike following a fruitful discussion with the government.

They announced the decision after a four-hour discussion at a meeting of the transport owners, workers leaders and government officials at the communication ministry in the afternoon.

Communication Minister Nazmul Huda chaired the meeting while State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar, State Minister for Labour and Employment Aman Ullah Aman and G M Siraj MF, BIWTC Chairman Advocate Shamsur Rahman Shimul Bishwash, BRTC Chairman Taimur Alam Khondoker represented the gov-

ernment at the meeting. Moshir Rahman Ranga MP, workers' federation leaders Shahjahan Khan MP, Habibur Rahman Khan, owners' leader Ashraf Khan took part in the discussion on behalf of the workers and owners.

"The strike was withdrawn as the transport workers and leaders were satisfied in the discussion with the government," Huda told the newsmen emerging from the meeting. "We assured them of considering their demand for fare hike after discussion in the cabinet," he said.

"We have withdrawn strike as the communication minister has accepted all of our demands and assured us of implementing those very soon," Habibur Rahman Khan said.

Mismanagement mars ICDDR'B's reputation

FROM PAGE 1

He was an external auditor and he knows the centre, and he totally dissociated himself from the other firm. He is very skilled, very qualified and he knows his job," said Sack.

ICDDR,B has a 16-member board of trustees where Bangladesh as the host is the only country represented by three members. By virtue of a decision made by the erstwhile president of the country, late Ziaur Rahman, the health secretary and the secretary to the Economic Relations Division become members of the board of trustees automatically. The Ministry of Health selects the third member, with relevant qualifications and expertise. The current Bangladesh members are Secretary to the Ministry of Health AKM Zafar Ullah Khan, Secretary to the Economic Relations Division Mohammad Ismail Zabihullah and for the first time ever Secretary General of the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) Dr AZM Zahid Hossain.

The trustees meet twice a year supposedly to take some of the vital decisions on recruitment, researches and important other issues. The chair of the board is Prof Terence H Hull from Australia while the member secretary is Prof David A Sack.

ICDDR,B sources said the role of the trustees during meetings remains 'totally insignificant', where all decisions made by Prof Sack are silently accepted and approved.

"Most of the members are very busy executives both in Bangladesh and abroad, who hardly have time to scrutinise facts and figures, so they trust the executive director working directly in the field," said a top-level source.

Sources said the silence of Bangladesh board members is usually managed by hefty honorariums, foreign trips and lucrative consultancies. A former health secretary to the Ministry of Health was offered the post of an 'adviser', a completely new position, with a top international salary. He joined the post a day after his retirement, raising questions as to how sincerely he served Bangladesh's interest while in the office.

Despite repeated attempts over a period of several days, the secretary of health and the secretary general of BMA could not be reached.

But, Secretary to the Economic Relations Division Mohammad Ismail Zabihullah said Bangladesh board members are never consulted before any recruitment.

"I have heard about some anomalies in the centre and we would like to convene an urgent meeting to discuss the issues," he said.

The ICDDR,B ordinance clearly says that the board of trustees must approve the appointments of all top level personnel in the centre. David A Sack however said he usually takes approvals of the members over the telephone.

The executive director denied the allegations saying, "I hope that is not true (that he runs a one-man show), these [members] are experienced people and we have a majority of people [members] coming from developing countries."

Over the last 28 years, the centre has conducted eight 'candidate vaccine trials' on lakhs of people at Matlab in Chandpur but mysteriously failed to produce a single report on the trials. Officials

who were serving at the time of 1985 vaccine trials on the people of Matlab alleged that the trials were run without the consent of the people on whom the experiment was conducted. Following the allegation of 'unethical research' the government then formed a task force to look into the matter. The report of the task force was never made public.

According to Sack, the cholera vaccine trial conducted in 1985 in Matlab was 'quite successful'. After 20 years, the same vaccine tried on the people of Matlab, has been patented by a Swedish company, and licensed and marketed in Europe, he said.

"It's too expensive to make it available in Bangladesh, but now WHO is making recommendations for use of the same vaccine in Bangladesh. We are working to develop a formulation which would be inexpensive for the people to use here, I am afraid that might take years," Sack said.

According to the ICDDR,B Ordinance 1978, the centre is to undertake and promote study, research and dissemination of knowledge in diarrhoeal diseases and directly related subjects with a view to developing improved methods of healthcare. The centre is to provide facilities for training to Bangladeshis and other nationals in collaboration with international institutions.

Although the executive director denied it, recently ICDDR,B in a clear violation of its charter, decided to hand over its training division to a top NGO, whose expertise in training personnel in the field of diarrhoeal diseases is not known.

"We are working with BRAC in their school of public health, the students of the school come to ICDDR,B for the second half of the school year for training, it is not true that we are handing over training division over to anyone," Sack claimed.

But the dean of BRAC's school of public health, also Deputy Executive Director A Mushtaque R Chowdhury told The Daily Star that talks are underway to hand over the international training division of ICDDR,B to BRAC.

"We have long experience in public health related work and we are preparing to take over the training division of ICDDR,B," Chowdhury said.

There are two distinct components of training -- diagnostic and clinical. For the former extensive laboratory work is necessary, and for the latter a well functioning hospital is needed. BRAC does not have either of the two. How can BRAC impart training is a question that experts familiar with ICDDR,B's work are asking.

ICDDR,B was set up by an ordinance in 1978, giving it immunity from local taxes, rates and duties. The ordinance offers a wide range of privileges for its foreign employees including exemption from income tax and privilege of duty free import of all personal and household items. The chairman, trustees, director, officers and employees of ICDDR,B are also immune from any legal proceedings with respect to acts performed by them in their official capacity. It is the only institution in the country that has the legal mandate for movement of biological materials in and out of the country.

DU POLITICAL SCIENCE EXAM RESULTS Probe body again invites information

DU CORRESPONDENT

The probe committee, formed to investigate the masters' results of political science department of Dhaka University (DU), has again invited information from all concerned.

A DU press release, signed by Abdul Latif, examination controller and member-secretary of the committee, has urged persons willing to provide information to report to the pro-vice-chancellor's office at 4:00pm on July 15.

Earlier, the committee asked the interested persons to report to the office on June 14.

"But they could not come to provide information on that day as it was a holiday day," Prof AFM Yusuf Haider, committee convener and pro-vice-chancellor, said, adding, "So we have fixed another day."

Only two persons who are 'faculty members' came to provide information on the issue, he added.

The release said the identity of the information provider would be kept secret.

As many as 52 students of the department secured first class in the master of social science examinations 2002 (held in 2004) that gave rise to a widespread controversy.

DU syndicate formed the probe committee on February 28 to investigate the matter.