

CORPORATISATION OF BANGLADESH RAILWAY
WB urges govt to expedite process

UNB, Dhaka

The World Bank (WB) has urged the government to expedite corporatisation and modernisation of Bangladesh Railway (BR) to make the sector vibrant and competitive for rendering better services.

WB Country Director Christine I Wallich made the call at a seminar in the city yesterday.

The seminar on 'The future of Bangladesh Railway: Learning from

international experience' was organised by the World Bank in cooperation with the Bangladesh Railway (BR) at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

Communication Minister Nazmul Huda was the chief guest at the opening session.

Speaking on the occasion, the WB country director said a major modernisation of BR would be needed for better support of the economy.

"Major investment will be

needed in tandem with reforms to improve BR's organisational structure and management practices, supported by a revamped policy environment for railways," she added.

Wallich said the ADB, JBIC and WB are joining hands to support the government's BR reform programme.

"A multi-year, multi-donor programme of up to US\$ 700-800 million is possible. The programme

is designed to include both policy reform and expansion of the rail track as well as improving signalling and communication system and procurement of rolling stock," she added.

Emphasising the need for a balanced transport system, Wallich said railway can be expanded with little land acquisition and is more environmentally sustainable which the road communication system is not.

"Railway saves energy and generates less pollution," she added.

The WB chief said the government's transport strategy has largely focused on the road sector with 85 percent of the annual transport development budget allocated to roads.

Nazmul Huda said there is no doubt that BR could not perform adequately to retain its share of the transport market.

"BR's declining revenue has been resulting in increasing deficit. With its resource constraints, the government cannot finance the increasing deficit," he added.

Huda identified that the major impediment for BR to provide efficient services and to retain its market share is the limitation of its physical infrastructure.

He said the government has undertaken steps to reform BR.

"BR will be able to become a vibrant sector earning considerable amount of revenue if it can ensure improved services to the people," he opined.

The minister informed that his ministry has been planning to establish an underground metro railway network in the capital city.



PHOTO: STAR

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad speaks at view exchange meeting with Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters' Association (BKMEA) in the city yesterday.

Dhaka proposes UN working group to monitor HR situation

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh proposed that the newly formed United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) form a working group "immediately" for periodic review of human rights situation in the member countries.

Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin put forward the proposal in his statement in the first session of the UNHRC, suggesting that members of the working group might be drawn from among the members of the Human Rights Council.

Hemayet is currently leading the Bangladesh delegation to the first session of the United Nations Human Right Council in Geneva.

The HR Council, as per UNGA Resolution, is expected to develop the modalities and necessary time allocation of the universal periodic review mechanism within one year after holding of its first session.

Bangladesh laid emphasis on determining what the human rights obligations and commitments are.

The foreign secretary said the very concept of human rights emerged from the notion that though there were some basic principles of human rights to which all could subscribe, but enforcement or implementation of those principles would be within the political boundaries of each state, though not an easy task.

Hemayet stated that the coun-

tries have human rights obligations emanating from their respective constitutions, laws or fundamental documents.

"Simultaneously, a body of international laws has been developing, defining some multilaterally agreed definitions of human rights," he told the session.

He emphasised an agreed understanding on the scope for the review of the human rights situation in the member countries. He recommended that the Council should act in a transparent and inclusive manner, if it was to complete the most difficult task.



PHOTO: STAR

World Bank Country Director Christine I Wallich speaks at a seminar on 'The future of Bangladesh Railway: Learning from international experience' organised by the World Bank at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday.

Tk 390 crore CCC budget

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) proposed a budget of Tk 390 crore and 81.27 lakh for 2006-07 fiscal yesterday.

Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury placed the proposed budget at the CCC auditorium. A revised budget of Tk 254 crore and 62.50 lakh for the last fiscal was also placed.

The budget for 2006-07 fiscal shows a surplus of Tk 2 crore and 44.57 lakh.

Of the total amount, Tk 208 crore and 26.27 lakh will come from the CCC's own resources while Tk 182 crore and 55 lakh will be available in the form of development grant and relief aid and from other sources.

The budget shows that Tk 138 crore and 44.70 lakh will be spent on management and maintenance while Tk 92.65 crore has been earmarked for development projects and payment of debts.

The CCC has allocated the highest amount of Tk 143 crore and 44.70 lakh for the creation of permanent resources of CCC.

28 fishermen still missing in Bay

UNB, Bagerhat

At least 28 fishermen remained missing after eight fishing trawlers with 110 people on board capsized in the Bay of Bengal on Sunday night.

Of the 110 fishermen, 82 were rescued by coast guard members from the Bay during the overnight rescue operation, coast guard

sources said.

They said some 500 fishermen in 50 fishing trawlers had gone to catch fish in the Bay. Of them, eight trawlers with 110 fishermen sank in the Bay as they were caught in a violent storm.

The missing fishermen were from Bagerhat, Pirojpur, Barisal, Bhola and Patuakhali districts.

US Ambassador calls on Harris Chowdhury

Bss, Dhaka

US Ambassador to Bangladesh, Patricia A Butenis yesterday made a courtesy call on Prime Minister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury at the latter's office.

Various issues of common interest and bilateral matters were discussed during the meeting.

PROF TAHER KILLING Shibir postpones celebration of 'mastermind's' bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A large number of Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) men of Rajshahi University (RU) yesterday postponed a celebration of Mahbubul Alam Salehi's getting an interim bail in the murder case of Prof S Taher.

Salehi is suspected of being one of the masterminds of the professor murder whose body was discovered in a septic tank behind his house on February 3 this year.

Sub-inspector of Detective Branch (DB) of police Ahsanul Kabir, also the investigation officer (IO) of the murder case, said, "We [police] have nothing to do if the court releases him [Salehi]. His arrest was necessary as he may have had some vital clues to the case."

Leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing ICS yesterday said the High Court freed Rajshahi University ICS President Salehi on anticipatory bail.

Salehi had gone into hiding after three suspected killers of Taher in their statements said Salehi had suffocated Taher during the murder.

RU ICS Secretary Nur Mandal said, "Salehi is free and he is likely to visit the campus very soon for his master's exams."

Under pressure from Jamaat-Shibir, RU authorities recently allowed Salehi to take his master's examinations even though he failed to attend the required number of classes.

The three arrested killers, Jahangir, Nazmul and Abdus Salam, in their confessional statements said RU teacher Mohiuddin and Salehi were involved in the murder.

Salam in his statement said, Salehi ensured Taher's death by suffocating him with a pillow over his face after Jahangir stabbed him. Nazmul, Salehi and Salam then dumped the body into a septic tank where he was found on February 3.

Jahangir in his statement said, Salehi and Mohiuddin persuaded him to commit the crime for over two months and offered him a computer and job at the university.

"I opted for shooting him to death but Salehi said that would make too much noise and Mohiuddin suggested suffocating him with the pillow," Jahangir said describing their planning before the murder.

The IO earlier told a Rajshahi court the police have evidence against Salehi which directly link him to the murder.

The police said, Salehi got involved in the plot to murder Taher to get Nazim a teaching job in the university and Salehi developed close relations with Mohiuddin through Nazim.

Unesco offers 15 fellowships

Bss, Dhaka

Within the frame work of Unesco Co-Sponsored Fellowships Scheme Loreal has declared 15 fellowships for promotion of young women who are carrying out research in the life sciences all over the world.

Candidates must already be engaged in pursuing research at the doctoral or post-doctoral level in one or 4 allied fields of life sciences including biology, biochemistry, biotechnology and physiology. Candidates must be 35 years of age, said a press release yesterday.

The study must be carried out in 24 months at least in one country abroad for a minimum duration of 12 months and a maximum duration of 22 months.

The value of the fellowships is forty thousand US dollar.

Competent young women scientists are requested to collect the guidelines and application form from Bangladesh National Commission for Unesco (BNCU) Office, Baneis Bhaban (3rd Floor), 1 Asian Highway, Palashi-Nilkhet, Dhaka-1205 and submit the filled in application there by July 31, 2006.

Make headscarves mandatory for female students

Pro-Islamic Pak women demand

AP, Islamabad

More than 200 women rallied in the Pakistani capital on Monday demanding the government make it mandatory for female students to wear Islamic headscarves or hijab in schools and colleges.

The supporters of the Imamia Students Organisation, a Shiite students group, marched from a Shiite mosque to the press club in central Islamabad carrying placards reading "Protest against Western culture" and "We will take the veil to every home to protect women's dignity."

WEATHER

T O D A Y

Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at many places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy falls are also likely at places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions, Met Office said in a forecast. It said that day temperature might fall slightly over the country.

Highest temperature 36.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 25.2 degree Celsius at Teknaf.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:50pm today and rises at 5:16am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.0	28.0	69	85
Chittagong	31.82	6.5	79	93
Rajshahi	33.4	27.2	75	89
Khulna	32.0	26.0	80	--
Barisal	29.5	25.8	92	--
Sylhet	36.4	28.2	55	--
Cox's Bazar	28.0	26.5	92	100

Outlaws kill 1 in Jhenidah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Cadres of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Janajuddho) shot dead a person in Kotchandpur upazila of Jhenidah Sunday night.

The dead was identified as Yasin Ali, 40, of Ganna Paikpara village of the same upazila.

According to police, the outlaws abducted Yasin from Ganna Bazar. They then shot him at Talina village and left his body in a field of Ekra village.

Later, a person identifying himself as PBCP leader Dipok Roy called up the local journalists and claimed responsibility for the murder, saying that Yasin was an 'informer' of the police.

Police, however, said that Yasin too was a PBCP leader.

2 PBCP cadres arrested in Jessore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Two cadres of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) were arrested in the town on Sunday night.

He arrestees are Shimul and Hadiuzzaman Chima. They are wanted in several cases, including murders and robberies.

A court sent the PBCP cadres to jail when Kotwali police produced them to the court yesterday seeking seven-day remand.

Honorary consul general of Yemen calls on Morshed

Bss, Dhaka

Newly appointed Honorary Consul General of Yemen to Bangladesh KM Mozibul Hoque called on Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan at his office in the city yesterday.

The Foreign Minister endorsed the appointment letter of Mozibul Hoque and handed over a letter to him in his regard.

Morshed Khan said, Yemen is a brotherly country of Bangladesh. There is a huge scope to exploit great potential that exists between the two countries especially in the field of trade and investment sectors, he said.

The foreign minister hoped that with the appointment of Mozibul Hoque, as Honorary Consul General, trade and economic activities between Bangladesh and Yemen will be strengthened.

Mozibul Hoque is a leading industrialist of the country and executive president of Orion Group.

Kazi Shah Mofazzal Hossain Kaikobad, MP, was present on the occasion.

Three killed in road accidents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three people were killed and 11 others injured in separate road accidents in Dhaka and Chittagong in the last two days.

In Dhaka, one person was killed and his wife injured severely when their private car collided with an Uttara-bound bus yesterday.

The accident took place at Taltala at around 1:45pm, leaving Rafiqul Islam, 50, dead on the spot. He along with his wife Swapna Begum was going to Ashulia, his relatives said.

His wife is now undergoing treatment at the Orthopaedic Hospital.

In another accident, an unidentified man was killed when an autorickshaw hit three pedestrians on the Airport Road at Khilkhet yesterday evening.

The autorickshaw veered off the road and hit the three people at around 6:00pm after being rammed by two covered vans, which were trying to overtake each other.

The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Our staff correspondent in Chittagong adds: One person was killed and eight others were injured critically in a collision between a microbus and a truck at Hathazari on Sunday night.

They were returning to their village home at Roshangiri in Fatikchhari by the microbus from Chittagong city after shopping for wedding accessories, but on the way a speeding truck collided head-on with the microbus at Bara Dighir Par of Aman Bazar at around 11:00pm, leaving all of them injured.

Razu Ahmed, 30, died on the way to hospital. Eight others are undergoing treatment at Chittagong Medical College Hospital. They are Shah Newaz, 40, his wife Shahnaz Begum, 25, Zakir Hossain, 2, Romana Akter, 38, Romel, 30, Zubaer, 28, and Sahara Begum.

HALUAGHAT ARMS HAUL CASE

Hearing on July 5

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Myrmensingh

Three indigenous people who were arrested in connection with the seizing of huge arms and ammunition at Haluaghat in the district on June 30 were produced before a court here yesterday.

Ashtutosh Drung, 45, Kusir Bajj, 25, and Bimol Mornu, 30, were produced before the court of first class Magistrate Morsheda Ferdousi with a remand prayer for seven days.

But the court fixed July 5 for hearing.

They were sent to jail hajat. Earlier a case was lodged with

Haluaghat Police Station under the Arms and Explosive Act.

Members of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) arrested them from the house of Ashutosh at Monikura village under Haluaghat upazila.

Huge arms and ammunition including two AK-47 rifles, one grenade launcher, 20 hand grenades and 348 mortar shells were seized from their occupation.

They were interrogated by BDR security unit but no information was gathered from them about the origin of the arms.

The arrestees were handed over to Haluaghat police yesterday.



Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan hands over an endorsement letter to newly appointed Honorary Consul General of Yemen KM Mozibul Hoque at the minister's office in the city yesterday.

Japan provides Tk 18.46 crores to DCC for sodium light

Bss, Dhaka

The government of Japan approved the utilisation of Japanese Counterpart Fund (JCF), amounting to Tk 18.46 crores for the project of installation of sodium light at different roads of Dhaka city, replacement of various vehicles and equipment for maintenance.

The JCF is generated from the Debt Relief Grant Aid (DRGA) and KR Food Aid, said a press release.

The Japanese government provided DRGA for eligible debtor countries including Bangladesh in return for repayment of their ODA debts.

The total amount of DRGA provided to Bangladesh was about Tk 15100 crore.

Masayuki Inoue, ambassador of Japan, expressed his hope that the assistance under JCF will make a significant contribution to the smooth and easy movement of the vehicles and people, while reducing antisocial activities drastically.

Robbers kill 70-yr-old

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Robbers killed an elderly person and looted valuables worth over Tk 5 lakh at Raozan upazila in the district during early hours yesterday.

According to sources, a group of some 25 robbers broke open iron grills and entered a house at Unasatturpara under Pahartali union of the upazila at around 1:00am yesterday.

The robbers held the residents of the house hostage at gunpoint and looted cash, valuables including 30 tola of gold ornaments and a licensed gun.

The gang shot the head of the household, Noor Mohammad, 70, to death as he tried to resist the looting by picking up his licensed gun.

The criminals picked up the gun from the slain and fled the scene firing, sources said.

DU exams postponed

DU CORRESPONDENT

All the examinations of Dhaka University (DU) scheduled for today have been postponed due to unavoidable reasons, says a DU press release yesterday.

Schedules of other examinations will remain unchanged.

Fresh date for the deferred examinations will be announced later.

Obituary

Sheikh Shahjahan Ali, a former deputy secretary, passed away at a city clinic on Sunday night at the age of 58, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, one son, three daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

He was buried at his family graveyard at Srinagar Kamargaon in Munshiganj yesterday.

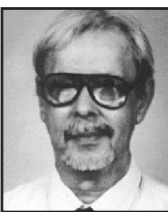
Md Abdus Sayed

Md Abdus Sayed of Islampur village in Mithamain, Kishoreganj, passed away due to lung cancer on Sunday at the age of 85, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, seven sons and 11 daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

In a condolence message yesterday, Deputy leader of the Opposition in Parliament Md Abdul Hamid expressed deep shock and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.

Omar Ali Chowdhury



A life-long bachelor, Omar was the youngest son of late Nawab Altaf Ali Chowdhury.

He was buried at Nakhapara graveyard.

His kulkhwani will be held at his home at Uttara after Asr prayers on Friday.

Death anniversary



Today is the 2nd death anniversary of Narunnahar Begum, wife of late Kabiruddin Ahmed, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at the orphanage of Pir Dudu Mia of Shariatpur.

Relatives and friends are requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.