

Body to probe train accident

Bangladesh Railway has formed a four-member high profile committee to investigate the container train accident that took place near the Lalmai Station on May 1, says a press release.

Six compartments of the Chittagong-bound train coming from Dhaka derailed and three compartments fell over at around 6:15pm on the day, causing delay in the regular train service of some Chittagong- and Sylhet-bound inter-city trains.

The committee members are Chief Engineer (east) AKM Mushfikur Rahman, Chief Operating Superintendent (east) MA Wahab, Chief Technical Engineer (east) Mohammad Shamsuzzaman and Chief Signal & Telecommunication Engineer (east) Khandaker Mohammad Shahidul Islam.

The committee has been asked to identify the cause and the people responsible for the accident and to submit its report soon with recommendations on how to prevent accidents in future.

The rail authorities have expressed regrets for the inconvenience caused to the passengers on May 1.



US Ambassador Patricia A Butenis speaks at a discussion marking World Press Freedom Day organised by Mass-line Media Centre at the LGED Bhaban auditorium in the city yesterday.

'Enact Right to Information Act'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday urged the caretaker government to enact the proposed 'Right to Information Act', drafted by Law commission in 2002, and to ensure

security for journalists.

They also pointed out several loopholes in the draft copy.

UNDP and the Media Initiative for Public Policy (MIPP) jointly organised the discussion on 'Right to Information' in the city to mark the World Press Freedom Day.

Speaking as the chief guest, Law and information adviser Barrister Mainul Hosen stressed the need to enact a law to ensure the people's right to information.

If the people had had access to information, the previous governments could not have abused power and resorted to such wide-spread corruption, he said.

Adviser Mainul Hosen also called on journalists to help mobilise public opinion against corruption and the abuse of power.

"If the people do not have confidence in an elected government, the laws will be ineffective. The people must have the ability to uphold democracy and make the government refrain from doing anything that jeopardises their rights," he said.

"The issues of bringing reforms to different sectors, including democracy, judicial system and the mass media, have come to the fore due to corruption and the failure of our politicians. As the state system was also being criminalised, the country could not be run without the military help," the adviser said.

He also said, "As we are going through the state of emergency and a great crisis, we express our concern over different issues on different occasions. Journalists must understand that we are here not to remain in power and sometimes we advise you out of tension. Do not think that our mistakes or advices are ill-motivated."

The adviser also called on jour-

nalists to remain careful, saying, "Some journalists and editors also misuse power to carry out different types of activities. Journalists should also bring about reforms within themselves."

He also assured journalists of announcing wage board award immediately.

Pranab Saha presented the keynote paper while Ali Ashraf, assistant country representative of UNDP, Zaglul Ahmed Chowdhury, Barrister Tanjibul Islam and Sanaullah Lavlu took part in the discussion moderated by Farid Hossain, co-ordinator of MIPP.

In another discussion, the speakers called on newsmen to unite to safeguard democracy and work towards establishing an independent mass media.

They also said there should be no obstacles to the flow of information.

The National Association of UNESCO Clubs in Bangladesh organised the discussion to mark the World Press Freedom Day-2007, says a press release.

Journalist Gias Kamal Chowdhury, development activist Sajedul Awaul, Mohammad Sharif and Rehana Munni spoke at the discussion presided over by Association Secretary General Mahbub Uddin Chowdhury.

Prof Shahed new DG of Bangla Academy

UNB, Dhaka

The government has appointed Prof Dr Syed Mohammad Shahed as director general of Bangla Academy.

A teacher of Bangla Department at Dhaka University, Prof Shahed was appointed on one-year contract. The appointment will be effective from the day of his joining.

Rohingya crisis can be solved amicably: President

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed said with sincere efforts on part of both Bangladesh and Myanmar all outstanding bilateral issues, including repatriation of the Rohingya refugees and maritime demarcation, could be solved amicably.

Referring to the recent signing

of agreement on direct road link, he said it would help further strengthen the bilateral relations and enhance trade, tourism and people-to-people contact.

This road will also connect Bangladesh with Thailand and China through Myanmar and would help enhance relations with the eastern countries. "Bangladesh may be the bridge between South

East Asia and South Asia," he told the newly appointed Myanmar envoy.

He told the new Ambassador U Nyan Lynn when the envoy presented his credentials to the President at Bangabhaban yesterday.

"Bangladesh attaches great values to its friendly relations with its neighbour Myanmar," he said.

The president said there is a great scope of widening bilateral trade between the two countries. He mentioned that the trade volume is heavily tilted in favour of Myanmar and said it could be narrowed down by importing more Bangladeshi products to the Myanmar market, including pharmaceuticals, melamine and other products.