

High-powered body formed for upgrading railway

Consulting firm recommends Dhaka-Ctg cord line

UNB, Dhaka

The caretaker government formed a six-member high-powered committee yesterday to recommend a package programme for upgrading the Bangladesh Railway.

The committee was formed at a meeting at the communication ministry, with Adviser Maj Gen (retd) MA Matin in the chair.

The committee headed by additional chief engineer (Mechanical) of Roads and Highways Department has been asked to submit its report within a month. The members of the committee are high officials from the railway, BRTC and the communications ministry.

They will find out ways to

improve the standard of passenger service and modernise the railway, and recommend the systems of implementing the plan. They will also find out the reasons behind the train accidents.

A consulting firm, engaged in carrying out feasibility study on installation of cord line by establishing double lines on Dhaka-Chittagong route, submitted its report before the meeting.

The consultants recommended setting up a new cord line to Chittagong from Dhaka via Fatullah-Laksam route, by setting up double line along the existing rails between Dhaka and Chittagong, at a cost of Tk 7,800 crore.

The distance of the Dhaka-Chittagong cord line will be 228 kilometres and it will take three

hours to travel between the capital and the port city.

The communication adviser said the government would consider the proposal for setting up the new line for upgrading the standard of passenger service of the railway.

"If the government takes the proposal as a positive one, a period of time would be needed to set up the new line," he told the meeting.

He urged the railway officers and employees to work with service attitude to restore the good image of railway through upgrading the passenger services for the sake of their own existence.

A number of communication experts, including eight former directors-general of Bangladesh Railway, also took part in the meeting.

Kushtia journo held on charge of extortion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Police arrested a local journalist last night in an extortion case filed by BNP cadre in 2005.

The arrested journalist is Shamsul Alam Swapan, Kushtia correspondent of the daily Amader Somoy.

According to sources, Sazzad Hossain, a second officer of Kushtia sadar police called Swapan to police station at about 7:30pm.

Police interrogated Swapan when he reached the police station about 8:00pm.

Police said Swapan is an accused in an extortion case filed by BNP cadre Ibrahim Ali, a close associate of former BNP lawmaker of Kushtia-2 Shahidul Islam with Bheramara Police Station. Three other journalists were also accused in this case.

Later, the two journalists except Swapan were granted bail from the High Court in July 23, 2005 in this case.

Police said they arrested Swapan as a warrant had been issued by a Magistrate Court in Kushtia.

International UN Peacekeeping Day today

UNB, Dhaka

The International United Nations Peacekeeping Day will be observed today with due solemnity and acclamation of the forces policing peace in different troubled corners of the world.

Bangladesh is joining other nations in observing the day for the first time this year, although the day has been observed across the globe since 2002.

President Iajuddin Ahmed, Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, UN Under Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations, chiefs of the three services, the Inspector General of Police and the UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh gave separate messages on the occasion, said an ISPR release.

Bangladesh Armed Forces have chalked out different programmes to mark the occasion, which bears a great importance for the country as it is the highest contributor to the UN peacekeeping force.

The day's programme will begin with 'peacekeepers run' that will be inaugurated by Chief of the Air Staff Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman at 6:30am.

Fakhruddin will later lay the foundation stone of 'Peace Monument' at the southwest corner of the National Parade Square at 3:00pm.

A reception to nearest keeps to fallen peacekeepers and retired injured peacekeepers will be arranged at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre at 3:30pm. Chief Adviser will attend the ceremony as the chief guest.

Present among others will be advisers of the caretaker government, Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed, Chief of Naval Staff Vice-Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizam, Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal S M Ziaur Rahman, Inspector General of Police Nur Mohammad, media personalities and high civil and military officials.

Besides, UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh Renata Desselien will attend the ceremony.

On the occasion, a theme song and a documentary on UN peacekeeping operations will be telecast on television channels, while national dailies will publish special supplements.

In his message, Iajuddin said, "Our peacekeepers have elevated the image of Bangladesh in the international arena by displaying a very high standard of professionalism, dedication, sincerity and courage."

Fakhruddin paid his "highest respects to those who have sacrificed their lives for restoring peace and stability in strife-torn countries and regions".



PHOTO: STAR
Law enforcers examine necessary documents of motorcycle riders in different city points in a bid to curb mugging and other crimes. The picture was taken from Shahbagh intersection yesterday.

India rejects greenhouse gas limits

AFP, New Delhi

India yesterday said it would reject proposals to limit greenhouse gas emissions at a summit meeting of the world's leading economies next month, because stricter limits would slow its booming economy.

"Legally mandated measures for reducing greenhouse gas emissions are likely to have significant adverse impacts on GDP growth of

developing countries, including India," environment ministry secretary Pradipto Ghosh said.

"This in turn will have serious implications for our poverty alleviation programmes," he said. "Legal mandates on greenhouse gas mitigation in any form will impact our growth, and this is not the path we wish to pursue."

Summit host Germany has

raise energy efficiency.

Global debate on climate change has acquired a new urgency as the Kyoto Protocol, the only global agreement that sets specific targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, expires at the end of 2012.

Talks on renewing the deal are under way, with the next round scheduled to take place in Indonesia in December.

Obaidul's firm misses

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that there has been "no impropriety in the award of the Project to BON", and therefore the consortium would now move forward.

Against this backdrop, the consortium says that as per the IA the financial closing date is set on May 28 -- giving it seven and a half months time since the signing of the deal last year.

In order to shift this deadline, the IA's clause 18.1 needs to be amended and the BON would be given 15 months time, instead of seven and a half months.

Industry insiders are however highly skeptical about the BON's ability to carry out the project even if such a time extension is allowed. "Neither Orion, nor Belhsa have ever installed a power project. The lead bidder Steag is nowhere to be found. There is no confidence among any EPC contractors in the BON. There is too much uncertainty over the Consortium itself," said an industry insider.

The government initially rejected such a gross anomaly, but then under pressure from the Hawa Bhaban the government accepted and approved the bid in August 2005. Orion signed a series of contracts with the PDB and other authorities for the power project and signed the LLA, the final deal, on October 11 last year.

Sources said that a lead sponsor contractor (in this case Steag) can take over shares with permission of the PDB. The contract does not give Belhsa the room to take over Orion's shares.

Obaidul Karim, who created the BON Consortium to bag power deals using his connections with the Hawa Bhaban, is wanted by the police in different

Dr Laila Anjuman Banu speaks at a discussion titled 'Social awareness and state initiatives to ensure safe motherhood' at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday to mark the International Safe Motherhood Day. On her left are Dr Firoz Mia, Ayesha Khanam, Samina Chowdhury and Dr Fauzia Moslem.

Orientation of DU science, law faculties held

29 girls among 44 held from 2 city hotels

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Forty-four people, including 29 girls, were arrested from two hotels at Maghbazar in the city yesterday for their alleged involvement in anti-social activities.

Police said they raided Hotel Diamond and Hotel Rupali in the Maghbazar area at around 2:00pm and picked up 29 women and 15 men from the hotels. Later, police took them to the Ramma Police Station.

Police said the arrestees will be produced before the court today.

Sources said police have sealed

IUB, Katalyst sign MoU regarding course on business journalism

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between Independent University of Bangladesh and Katalyst for initiating the project of introducing a course on Business Journalism in the existing syllabus for the Journalism department of Independent University of Bangladesh (IUB).

Katalyst will be facilitating this intervention and Mass-line Media Centre (MMC) will be acting as a sub-facilitator throughout the project.

off 10 hotels in the city since May 20 on charges of sex trade.

Police continue raids on different city points to prevent such anti-social activities.

Domestic help commits suicide in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A minor domestic help committed suicide at Khilgaon in the city on Sunday night.

The victim was identified as Shuma Akhter, 11, daughter of Mohammad Babul. She was working as a domestic help at the house of Kohinoor Begum at West Rampura.

Police said they recovered the body from the bathroom of the house at around 11:30pm and sent it to the Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Police quoting family members of Kohinoor said she (Kohinoor) scolded Shuma on the day as she was playing instead of doing her work.

Shuma went to the bathroom at night and hanged herself from the shower with a scarf, police added.

Later, the family members broke open the door of the bathroom and found the body.

An unnatural death case was filed with the Khilgaon Police Station yesterday.

Huge current nets, jatka worth Tk 71 crore seized

Bangladesh Navy Ship Shaheed Farid seized huge current nets and 'jatka' worth Tk 71 crore in different raids on the Hilsa breeding areas of the country recently, says an ISPR press release.

The current nets were 1,36,800 metres long. Navy personnel conducted raids near Himchar, Kodalpur, Jalalpur, Ibrahimpur, Alupur, Majherchor, Charbhairobi, and adjacent areas of coastal belt of Patuakhali, Borguna and Chandpur districts on May 26 as part of its 'Operation Jatka' campaign.

Later, the apprehended nets were burnt in presence of Commanding Officer of BNS Shaheed Farid Lt Cdr Humayun Kabir, local district fisheries officer and magistrate.



PHOTO: ISPR

BNS Shaheed Farid seized huge current nets and 'jatka' worth Tk 71 crore in different raids on the Hilsa breeding areas of the country recently.