

Ecneec okays Padma Bridge, national ID card projects

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecneec) yesterday approved 11 projects involving Tk 13,150 crore.

The projects include construction of the long awaited Padma multipurpose bridge, preparation of electoral roll with photographs and issuance of national identity cards.

The approval was given at a meeting with Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed in the chair.

Donors will provide Tk 8,267 crore as loans and grants for seven projects (total cost Tk 12,758 crore) while the government will fund the rest four projects.

Meeting sources said the Ecneec

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Dipjol, wife get 7yrs in arms case

Cops asked to submit probe report on extortion case of Koko

STAR REPORT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Ward Commissioner Monwar Hossain Dipjol and his wife Rumana Monwar to seven years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) for possessing illegal ammunition.

Meanwhile, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) will interrogate detained former BNP lawmaker Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu at the Dhaka Central Jail gate in connection with a graft case.

The ACC yesterday submitted

petitions to interrogate detained former communications minister barrister Nazmul Huda, his wife Sigma Huda and controversial businessman Glasuddin Al Mamun at the Dhaka Central Jail gate in connection with graft and extortion cases.

DIPJOL CASE

Judge Nuruzzaman of Metropolitan Special Tribunal-7 pronounced the verdict in Dipjol's absence while his wife Rumana was present at the jam-packed courtroom.

The same court sentenced Dipjol to 17 years' RI on July 26 for possessing illegal firearms and ammu-

nition at his Mirpur residence.

In the judgement, the court said the charges brought against the couple were found to be true.

The punishment of fugitive Dipjol will be effective from the day of his arrest or surrender, the judge said.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence had completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 11 prosecution witnesses.

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Some advisers plotting long-term conspiracy

Alleges Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina accused some of the advisers to the caretaker government of plotting a long-term conspiracy to eliminate her party with a long tradition from politics.

Hasina, a former prime minister, also accused the advisers of misusing the state of emergency rules with a political motive and frustrating the people's earnest desire for the anti-corruption drive.

"The main agenda of the caretaker government was to create a level playing field to hold a free and

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PHOTO: STAR

Gridlock on both sides of Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in the capital near Karwan Bazar yesterday afternoon delays the commute of city residents.

5 injured in fire at RMG factory

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire broke out at a garment factory in city's Shanir Akhra area yesterday leaving at least five people injured.

A huge quantity of clothes was gutted in the inferno.

Sources said the fire originated from the top floor of the six-storey building of Rich Fashion Garment Ltd at Gobindapur bazar in Shanir Akhra area at about 1:45pm.

Five people including garment factory director Jalal Uddin were injured as they tried to escape hurriedly.

Taiyabul Islam, quality controller of the factory, said most of the factory workers were having lunch when the fire broke out.

"When I reached fourth floor, I saw smoke everywhere. I rushed to the fifth floor and saw fire spreading quickly," he said.

The garment factory runs its operation from second floor to fifth floor.

On information, fire fighters rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze after two hours.

The fire fighters could not confirm the cause of the fire.

The authorities claimed clothes and other materials worth several crores were gutted in the fire.



PHOTO: STAR

Firefighters try to douse flames on the top floor of a garment factory at Shanir Akhra in the capital yesterday as onlookers watch from the ground and roof-tops.

Iraqi governor killed in roadside bomb

Shia rifts deepen

AFP, Samawa

Bombers killed an Iraqi provincial governor for the second time in two weeks yesterday, amid mounting tensions between rival Shia armed factions in the country's southern cities.

Brigadier General Kadhim al-Jayashi, chief of police in the city of Samawa, said the governor of the southern province of Muthanna, Mohammed Ali al-Hassani, was killed by a roadside bomb on his way to work.

"Police leaders have imposed a curfew on Samawa after the assassination," he told AFP. "We have formed a committee to investigate."

Hassani is the second Shia governor to be killed within a fortnight, amid growing signs of conflict between rival political and militia factions within the country's majority community.

On August 11, the governor of the neighbouring province of Qadisiyah, Khalil Jamil Hamza, was killed in a multiple bomb attack on his convoy as it passed through his

capital Diwaniyah.

Both Hamza and Hassani were members of the Supreme Iraqi Islamic Council (SIIC), one of Iraq's most powerful parties and a bitter rival of another Shia movement led by radical cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.

Sectarian violence between Shia and Sunni factions have dominated the headlines since the US-led invasion of March 2003, but tensions inside both rival communities have also sometimes erupted in bloodshed.

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Policy on cards for foreign university branches

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The University Grants Commission (UGC) is considering formulation of a policy under the Private University Act for easy identification of the legal and illegal branches of foreign universities.

UGC, the apex regulatory body overseeing private and public universities, yesterday met with the representatives of some 17 foreign university campuses and provided them a questionnaire for collecting information about their academic and other matters.

"Previously we declared 56 foreign university campuses illegal as they have no permission from the UGC or education ministry. We invited all of the 56 institutes but the representatives of only 13 of them

and four other foreign university campuses were present at the meeting. We took the initiative to formulate a policy or guideline for foreign university campuses under Private University Act," UGC Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam said yesterday.

He said some of the foreign university campuses are conducting academic activities taking permission from commerce ministry or Dhaka City Corporation, which is unethical as approval from the UGC, or education ministry is needed for running a higher educational institution.

"We provided a questionnaire paper and asked them to fill up and submit it by one week. Probably four or five foreign university

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SC grants bail to Sanjay Dutt

PTI, New Delhi

The Indian Supreme Court yesterday granted interim bail to Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt, who has been sentenced to six years imprisonment by the TADA court in connection with the 1993 Mumbai serial blasts case.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice KG Balakrishnan enlarged Dutt on bail till the TADA court in Mumbai provides him with a copy of the

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Economy was in disarray for politics

Says Mainul

UNB, Comilla

Information Adviser Mainul Hossain yesterday said the country's economic situation was thrown into disarray by political disaster, which the present caretaker government is trying hard to heal.

"The country was heading towards a civil war. We, taking over power, prevented that from happening with spontaneous support of the people," he said.

The adviser made the remarks about the past political era in a view-exchange meeting with government officials and local elite in the deputy commissioner's conference room here.

He said the country has been passing through a "revolution" since the regime change in January last amid a grave political crisis over the issue of general election.

"Many changes have been brought about in the country under the blowing wind of change. Some problems may arise and we will have to get over these problems," he said.

Mainul, also in charge of the Ministry of Law and Justice, also had a remark about the insistence on electoral roadmap and focused on this government's agenda regarding election and its outcome.

"Foreigners want election roadmap. We want to establish

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Bangladesh among five nations with rising AIDS

ASHFAQ WARES KHAN, from Colombo

Bangladesh has been identified as one of the five countries where HIV/AIDS infections are rising in the Asia-Pacific region, despite prevalence rates remaining low in the region, it was revealed at the 8th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific in Colombo yesterday.

Over 2,000 officials, experts, healthcare workers and victims have gathered in Colombo for the conference to share their experience in fighting the spread of the disease and treating those who are

already infected in the region, which has the second largest number of people affected by HIV in the world, with around 300,000 AIDS-related deaths a year.

They will hold around 250 seminars, workshops, sessions and symposiums over five days between August 19 and 23 under the theme of "Waves of Change, Waves of Hope."

UNAIDS officials yesterday said there are plenty of reasons to worry about AIDS in the region, "Starkly underlined by the rising number of new infections in countries like China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan."

However, other experts and practitioners said Bangladesh still has relatively low prevalence rates, with concentrated cases in Dhaka and three other cities, defying fears that an injected drugs users epidemic would have accelerated the spread of the infection to disastrous levels within 2008.

The UNAIDS also observed that political instability directly affects the battle against HIV as programmes face a shortage of funds and treatment services and it becomes harder for people to access health services.

Bangladesh has over 50

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Unique Thai gesture for flood-hit people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a unique gesture, the Thai embassy in Dhaka together with the Thai community in Bangladesh will organise a two-day food fair on August 24-25 which aims at raising fund for the country's flood-hit people.

The organisers will donate the fund to be collected from the "Food against Flood: Helping Hands for Food Relief" fair for relief and rehabilitation efforts, said a Thai embassy press release yesterday.

Starting at 10:00am on August 24 at the Royal Thai Embassy, the fair will run through Saturday till

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Pakistan warns India against nuclear tests

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan yesterday hinted it would renounce its unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing if India were to resume trials, last carried out by both countries nine years ago.

New Delhi has said its right to conduct tests will not be undermined by a bilateral civilian nuclear deal with the United States, which has raised concerns here.

Washington has said there would be no such deal with Pakistan, its front-line ally in the ongoing battle to contain global terrorism.

"We take seriously the assertions by the India leadership about the possibility of resuming nuclear tests," foreign ministry spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam told a weekly briefing.

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Prayer Timing		
August 21		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30	5-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-33	6-36
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		



PHOTO: STAR

A child is left to sleep in a cradle outside yesterday as its home is inundated with floodwater near the flood-control embankment at Rayer Bazar in the capital.