

## East zone plans 2 new inter-city trains with 30 posh coaches

DWAIPAYAN BARUA

Bangladesh Railway is importing 30 new air-conditioned coaches for its east zone to introduce two new inter-city trains between Chittagong and Dhaka with a view to providing better service to the commuters.

The Railway authorities have taken the plan when the east zone faces shortage of engines or locomotives to maintain its present service, sources said.

Of the new coaches, 14 have already arrived in Chittagong Port on April 30 while the rest 16 are expected to arrive next month, sources added.

Railway authorities are importing the coaches manufactured by China Machinery Export and Import Corporation under a Tk 106 crore project titled 'Procurement of 30 Air Conditioned Coaches'.

Railway officials said addition of the coaches will help to some extent maintain rail service in the region that is running without adequate coaches.

The air-conditioned coaches include 14 chair coaches, five chair-coach cum dining, three coupes (sleepers), four power cars and four inspection cars.

Chief Mechanical Engineer (CME) of Bangladesh Railway (East Zone) Md Khalilur Rahman, also project director, said the coaches are more spacious and comfortable ones that will surely attract the passengers.

He said two fully air-conditioned express train will be launched on different routes with the coaches.

He, however, said the decision about use of the coaches has not yet been finalised.

Earlier, 50 coaches were imported in three phases last year from the same company. Of them, 32 were added to three inter-city trains on Dhaka-Chittagong route like Subarno Express, Turna Nishitha and Mohanagar Probhati replacing old ones.

Railway authorities earlier said one more train will be added to the Subarno Express with 18

other coaches to help two trains leave both the ends of Dhaka-Chittagong routes at a time by March. But the coaches still are lying idle at the Carriage and Wagon Repair Workshop at Pahartali.

A railway official preferring anonymity said the new Subarno Express could not be introduced for lack of engine (locomotive).

He said the east zone is facing shortage of adequate engines to run the present coaches.

There are now around 138 engines in the east zone while 20 per cent of them remains at the Carriage and Wagon Repair Workshop at Pahartali for repair.

To keep the service operative, the zone requires at least 108 engines everyday while it can provide maximum 102 engines, he said.

Engineer Khalil said procurement of nine locomotives from Japan is under process. A project has been signed with Japan Bangladesh International Corporation (JBIC) in this regard, he added.



New air-conditioned coaches for Railway east zone.

### THIRD KARNAPHULI BRIDGE

## Construction likely to complete ahead of schedule

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD

Construction of the Third Karnaphuli Bridge is likely to be completed by June next year -- three months ahead of the schedule.

The construction started in August in 2006 under a project worth Tk 590 crore. With the financial assistance of Kuwait, work of 950-meter bridge with 24-metre width was scheduled to be completed by September next year.

"With 43 per cent of the construction already completed we expect to finish the work two to three months ahead of the schedule," said Project Director Superintendent Engineer Abdul Mukadir Belal of Road & Highway Department.

The time consuming tasks, including construction of all the 16 underground piles that support four piers of the main bridge, have already been completed.

"We have made up the loss we suffered for some four months when the construction was hampered at the initial stage in late 2006. The construction is now going on in full-swing to complete it by June next year," he said.

The bridge would have four piers three in the river and one on the sands on the other bank. It would have a 0.5 km approach road at the city end and a 1.5 km approach road at the Patiya end.

The bridge will have four lanes for vehicular traffic and two 1.5m lanes for movement of manual transports like rick-

shaws, push carts and vans. Besides, there will be a 1.5m walkway on each side of the bridge, Belal said.

The third bridge on the Karnaphuli was planned as the century-old Kalurghat railroad bridge and renovated Shah Amanat Bridge could hardly cope with the flow of vehicular traffic to maintain the road communication of South Chittagong with the rest of the country.

The bridge will open up a scope of industrialisation on the other bank of the river Karnaphuli linking the tourist city of Cox's Bazar and south Chittagong alongside easing suffering of the passengers.

However, debate over its type delayed the implementation process initiated in 2002.

Belal said the bridge is being constructed following the report of River Research Institute.

Communications Adviser Maj Gen (Retd) Ghulam Quader while visiting the bridge site recently said the bridge is the most suitable one in consideration of the type of soil, location and morphology of the river.

This type of bridge is economical when the costs of both the construction and maintenance are considered, he said.

A suspension bridge is not possible here due to the soft earth of the riverbanks. At the same time its construction is also highly costly, he said.

Navigability of the river was considered before going for the present type of the bridge since it will not cause any significant

change in the morphology or siltation of the river, said the adviser.

Besides, removal of the second bridge after completion of the third bridge will reduce the rate of siltation at Karnaphuli channel, he added.

Former prime minister Khaleda Zia laid the foundation of the bridge on April 19 in 2004 to construct the bridge with the financial assistance of Dutch-Swedish Consortium by 2006.

Later, the Cabinet Committee on Purchase approved construction of the Third Karnaphuli Bridge at a meeting on June 15, 2006.

China Major Bridge Company was awarded work order for construction of the bridge within 38 months.



Construction work of the Third Karnaphuli Bridge is going on in full swing.

## the week that was

### 'Make jute mills profitable'

Leaders of Jute Mills CBA Samannaya Parishad on Sunday emphasised the need for government helps, effective plans and graft-free management for making the existing jute mills profitable.

They urged the government to ensure allocation for the mills according to the budget and procurement of the quality jutes at the beginning of its season.

They made the demand at a press conference at Chittagong Press Club auditorium.

Parishad Convener Mohammad Tofazzal Ahmed read out a written statement at the conference while Member Secretary Mohammad Jahangir Hossain replied to journalists.

They said the owners of the private jute mills buy all quality jutes in the beginning of the season while the state-run mills don't get money during the period for buying jutes.

They criticised the move for privatising the jute mills and demanded reduction of the bank interests from 12 percent to seven percent.

### AL demands release of Hasina

Awami League (AL) leaders on Saturday demanded release of party chief Sheikh Hasina and called upon the party men to work together for development of the country.

They underscored the need for overcoming the present crisis for smoothing the way for democracy.

They were addressing a discussion organised to mark the "Homecoming Day of Sheikh Hasina" at Chittagong Press Club auditorium. AL Chittagong Metropolitan Unit organised the discussion where the unit's former president MA Mannna was present as the chief guest. Speakers said the 1/11 is a result of the movement that the AL waged led by Hasina. Criticising the four-party alliance government, they said the BNP-led government could not provide anything good for development of the mass people. The unit Vice President Belayet Hossain presided over the discussion while General Secretary Enamul Haque Danu, Vice President Nurul Islam BSC, leaders Afsarul Amin, Khorshedul Alam Sujan, Advocate Ibrahim Hossain Babul and Sunil Sarker spoke.

### CCC asked to complete excavation of canals

Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Hossain Jamil and Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) acting mayor M Manjur Alam visited the excavation and dredging works of different canals and garbage dumping points on Friday.

Jamil asked CCC for completing the work before the upcoming rainy

season. CCC Chief Executive Officer AKM Khairul Alam and acting chief engineer Mohammad Nizam Uddin Chowdhury accompanied the mayor and divisional commissioner during the visit.

The CCC has been implementing the canals and drains excavation and dredging works to rid the city of waterlogging.

### Oli blames political leaders for current situation

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Executive President Col (Retd) Oli Ahmed said rampant grafts, wrong deeds and negligence by the political leaders are mainly responsible for the current situation that forces the common people to live amidst an abnormal time.

Referring to the withdrawal of ban on indoor politics, he urged them to go forward carefully as they will suffer much more if repetition of their past mistakes take place.

He was addressing a gold medal giving ceremony as the chief guest at Chittagong Press Club on Saturday.

Samannaya, a social welfare organisation of Chittagong, organised the function.

A total of 17 social workers were awarded gold medals for their contribution to the society. Col Oli called upon the affluent section of the society to come forward and extend their helping hands for the distressed people.

He said the awardees have set up examples in social work that will

inspire others. Organisation President Muhammad Sirajul Kabir presided over the ceremony while veteran Revolutionary Binod Bihari Chowdhury, former principal of Government Mohsin College Prof Mohammad Fazlul Haque and organisation's General Secretary AKM Moynuddin Rassel also spoke. Later, the guests handed over the medals to the awardees.

### Workshop on labour code held

A daylong workshop on "Bangladesh Labour Code 2006" was held Asian SR Hotel auditorium in the port city on Thursday.

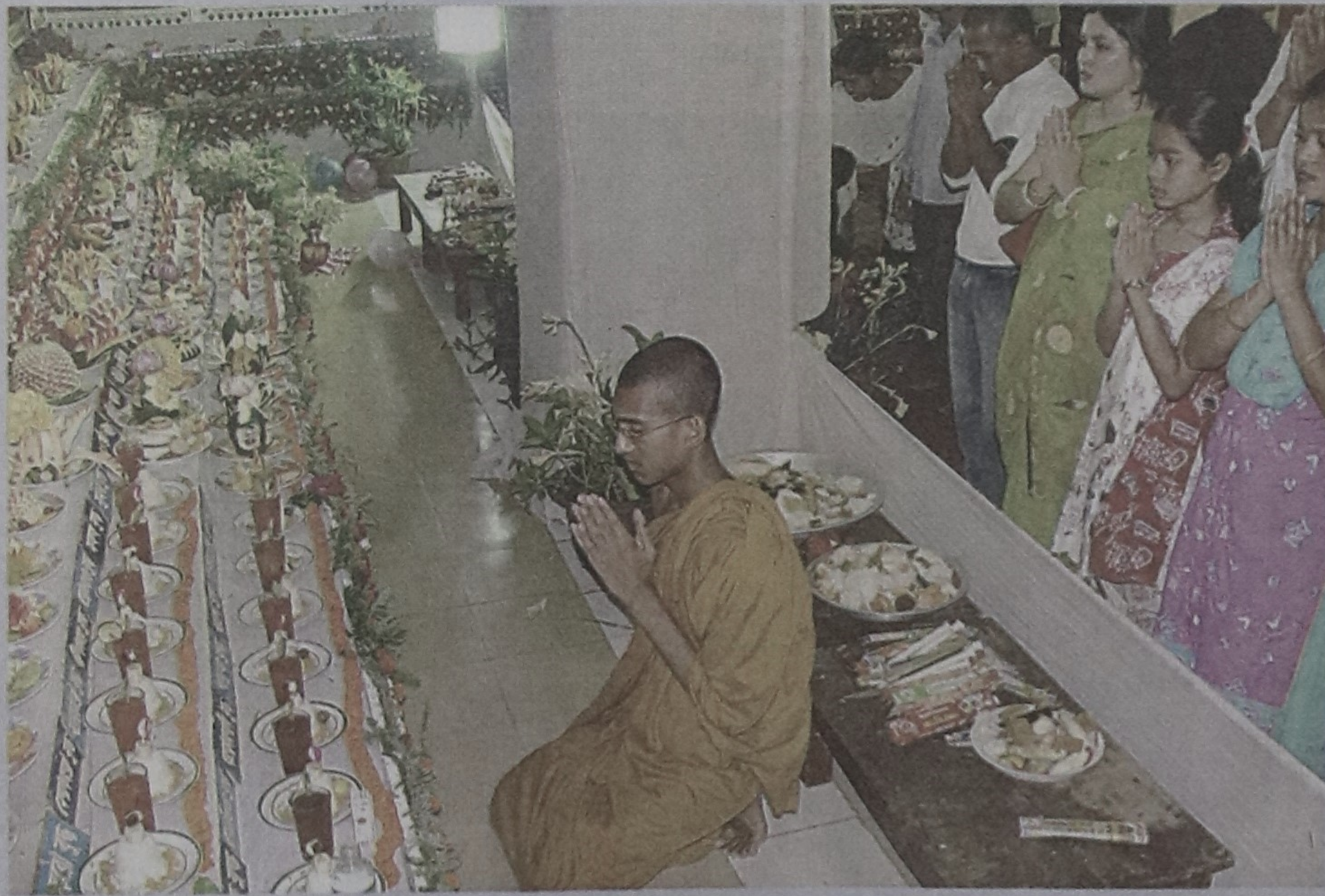
British Institute for Professional Development (BIPD) organised the workshop in cooperation with the social development organisation - Superimpose.

Justice Nirmolendu Dhar, chief of Supreme Court Labour Court Division, was the chief assistant at the workshop while Seba Limited Consultant Manjur Morshed and Executive Director Victor Biswas attended it.

Representatives from KDS, Clifton Group, Base Textile, Well Group, Mostafa Garments, Asian Group, KLM Apparels, Osen Garments and Canvas Garments participated in the workshop.

### Workshop on bamboo

A daylong regional workshop on



Devotees offer prayers at Chittagong Buddha Bihar on Monday on the occasion of Buddha Purnima.

"Bamboo Resources, Management and Uses" was held in the port city on Thursday.

Bangladesh Forest Research Institute (BFRI) organised the workshop at its auditorium with BFRI Chief Research Officer Dr Mohammad Khairul Alam in the chair.

"Market Development and

Bamboo and Rattan Products with Potential" International Coordinator Mohammad Abdul Latif and nine scientists, including four from Nepal and Myanmar, attended the workshop.

Speakers said bamboo and cane products can be used as alternative to the wooden products which can

fetch huge foreign currency through exporting the products.

They also put up different aspects of introducing and uses of bamboo and cane rehabilitation certification system, modernisation of production of the bamboo and cane products according to demands of the developed countries, spreading the prod-

ucts among rural people and engaging the woman with it.

The BFRI is implementing the project titled "Market Development of Bamboo and Rattan Products with Potentials" financed by "Common Fund for Commodities" of the Netherlands in Bangladesh, China, Nepal and Myanmar.