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CIRCULAR WATERWAY PHASE-II

Poor rate for excavation fails to attract any firm

HELEMUL ALAM

Although one and half years have passed since Ecnec's approval of the circular waterway (phase-II), excavation work of the main channel could not begin as the government failed to attract any firm due to fixing low rate for the task.

A BIWTA official said they have sent a revised development project proposal (DPP) to shipping ministry by raising the cost to Tk 75 crore from Tk 47.50 crore for the planned 40.5-km long waterway stretching from Ashulia to Kanchpur Bridge via Tongi.

The official said they failed to get satisfactory offer from any firm in two rounds of biddings due to fixing low rate for the excavation, main work in the second phase.

In the first tender which was received in March 2007 got an offer from a firm, Abdul Momen Limited, at a rate of Tk 250 for excavating per cubic metre but the rate was mentioned at Tk 95 in BIWTA tender.

But no tender was found in

the second round of bidding, which was opened in May 2007, said the official.

The Tk 47.50 crore project proposal of the circular waterway phase-II got the approval of the executive committee of the national economic council (Ecnec) on August 20, 2007.

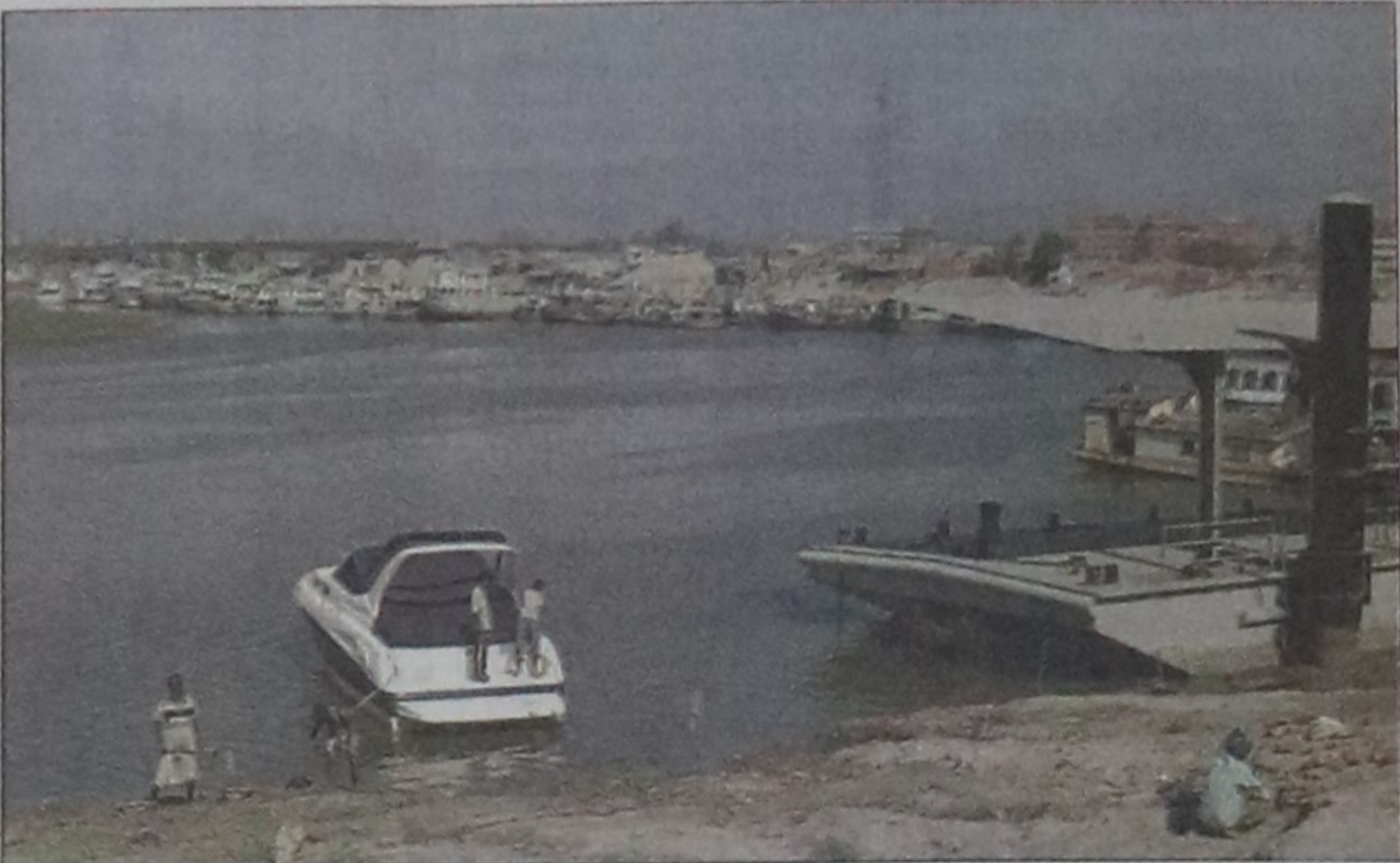
The phase-I of the 29.5-kilometre circular waterway was opened on March 3, 2005 and the construction work of the second phase was scheduled to be started from July 2005.

On completion of the work of phase-II, the total circular

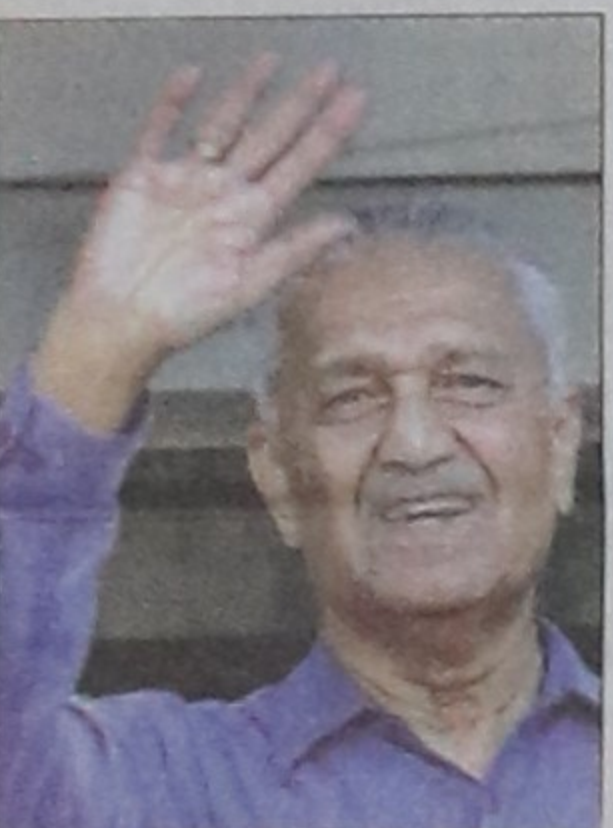
waterway would stand at 110-km, including the existing 40.5-km waterways from Kanchpur to Narayanganj-Munshiganj-Sadarghat.

The Bureau of Research Testing and Contingency of BUET which was appointed to

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This photo shows one of the 10 landing stations of the Circular Waterway project in Dhaka. The project was aimed at reviving a number of waterways surrounding the capital to ease traffic jams.



Court declares Qadeer Khan a free man

AFP, Islamabad

A Pakistani court yesterday ruled that nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan, father of the country's atomic bomb, was a free man, five years after he was effectively put under house arrest.

The chief justice of the Islamabad High Court, Sardar Mohammad Aslam, made the decision after hearing lawyers representing government and the nuclear scientist in a closed doors session on Friday.

"The petitioner is declared a free citizen and writ petition is disposed off," said a written order issued by the court.

Khan has been effectively under house arrest in Islamabad since February 2004, when he confessed on television to sending nuclear secrets to Iran, Libya and North Korea, although he retracted his remarks later.

Friday's court decision comes just weeks after the United States unveiled sanctions against Khan, 12 associates and three firms linked to

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Prayer Timing		
February 7		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-52	5-56
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

ISI behind Mumbai attacks: India

Pakistan to publish report next week

AFP, New Delhi/Lahore

India for the first time yesterday directly accused Pakistan's military intelligence agency of involvement in the Mumbai attacks.

In a speech in Paris reported by the Indian media yesterday, Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon said the perpetrators "planned, trained and launched their attacks from Pakistan, and the organisers were and remain clients and creations of the ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence)."

The stunning November assault on India's financial capital, when 10 gunmen killed 165 people during a 60-hour siege, has led to a furious blame game that has sharply escalated tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbours.

In January, India handed Islamabad a dossier of what it said was evidence linking "ele-

ments" in Pakistan to the attack.

India has blamed the assault on the banned militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba, which is active in Indian-ruled Kashmir, but the Pakistan-based organisation has denied responsibility.

Pakistan has confirmed that the lone surviving Mumbai gunman, who is now in Indian custody, is one of its citizens, but it insists that the attackers were "non-state actors."

India had previously blamed the ISI for a suicide attack on its embassy in Kabul last July, in which 60 people, including India's military attaché and a diplomat, were killed.

Menon said India had long suffered from "terrorist organisations, their support structures, official sponsors and funding mechanisms, which transcend national borders but operate within them."

He also criticised foreign arms sales to

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Islamic Chhatra Shibir, student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, yesterday brings out a procession from Engineers' Institution in the capital to mark its 32nd founding anniversary. The procession caused traffic jams that took over an hour to clear although it was a weekend.

PHOTO: STAR

4-hr Shishu Prohor at Ekushey fair

RAKIB AHAMMED

The time was not much, just four hours. But those four hours made the Amar Ekushey Boi Mela alive yesterday with hundreds of children running from one stall to another as if the entire Bangla Academy premises were their playground.

The Academy dedicated the four hours--11:00am to 3:00pm--for children as Shishu Prohor (children's hour). Although it has not kept any corner at the fair for children this year, it has dedicated three days--February 6, 7 and 27--for them.

Parents, however, expressed concern over the quality and contents of the new books for children.

"This book fair reflects our

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PHOTO: STAR

Unable to wait any longer, children start reading soon after buying books at Amar Ekushey Boi Mela. The fair yesterday dedicated four hours for children.

Soya bean oil prices drop again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prices of soya bean oil of different brands came down by Tk 5 per litre while the non-brand ones by Tk 2-6 per litre in the kitchen markets in the city over the past three days.

Price of potato dropped by Tk 5 per kg while price of onion marked a fresh hike last week.

A five-litre jerry can of Teer soya bean oil was selling for Tk 375-385 yesterday, down from Tk 400-410 three days back.

A five-litre jerry can of Rupchanda was selling for Tk 395-405 yesterday. It was sold for Tk 420-430 three days ago.

Meantime, a litre of non-brand soya bean oil was selling at Tk 68-75 a litre in different

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POLLS EXPENDITURE Hasina spent Tk 3 lakh in Bagerhat-1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Sheikh Hasina has spent only Tk 3.10 lakh in her election campaign for Bagerhat-1 (Fakirhat-Mollahat-Chitalmari) constituency.

According to Bagerhat district election office, Hasina in her polls expenditure statement submitted to the office said she spent Tk 1.06 lakh on publicity, Tk 20,400 on transportation, Tk 60,000 on public meetings, Tk 50,000 on running the election camps, Tk 52,700 on her agents' salaries and Tk 20,900 on miscellaneous tasks.

BNP to help try war criminals

Says SQ Chowdhury

A CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

BNP lawmaker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury yesterday said his party would give its best effort to help try war criminals.

"Our party offers its utmost assistance to the government in bringing the war criminals to justice," he said after Juma

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MYANMAR MIGRANTS

Thai PM vows to take action against abusers

AFP, Tokyo

Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva pledged yesterday to hold accountable any security forces who abused Muslim migrants from Myanmar after hundreds of boat people were found adrift.

He made the promise on a visit to Japan, where he tried to assure Thailand's biggest investor that the kingdom was "back on track" after months of intense political turmoil.

"If facts emerge that there have been abuses by our officials, they will have to be held accountable," Abhisit told a news conference here.

"Whether it's refugees, whether it's illegal migrant workers, my government intends to respect humanitarian principles and human rights," he added.

The fledgling government has been under

fire after hundreds of migrants from Myanmar's Rohingya Muslim minority were rescued in Indian and Indonesian waters in recent weeks, some covered with welts.

They have said they were detained and beaten before being set adrift with few supplies by Thai security forces. Rights groups fear scores may have perished. A photograph apparently showing the Thai army towing refugees out to sea has been published in the media.

But the British-born premier insisted there was no proof of wrongdoing.

The migrants are "clearly young men seeking economic opportunities trying to enter Thailand illegally," he said.

"The reports of abuse are solely based on accounts given by these people and nothing more," he added, while urging neighbouring

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PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Navy's anti-smuggling cell recovers 193 sacks of urea fertiliser about to be smuggled out on a boat in the outer anchorage of Chittagong Port early yesterday.

The Daily Star

Coming out tomorrow - Star Campus

Linking Young Minds Together

The Daily Star offers campus based weekly magazine 'Star Campus' - the ultimate magazine for the young generation - a common platform for the college and university students and academicians - to share their ideas, thoughts, dreams, opinions and views. Star Campus is an endeavour to bring into the center stage the visionary aspects of our college and university students, alongside their lifestyle, cultural trends and their multidimensional talents. Star Campus is a magazine broadly based on campus life! It contains articles, academic news, achievements, travelogues, interviews, book reviews, quiz, milestones, academic tips, profiles of educational institutes, cultural and extra-curricular activities in campus, jokes, cartoons, photographs and much more. This is a magazine Of the Students, By the Students and For the Students. Star Campus helps link young minds together.



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Pakistan kills 52 militants in Khyber region

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistani helicopter gunships and ground forces killed 52 militants in a massive operation to clear Taliban fighters out of the flashpoint Khyber region on Friday, security officials said.

The operation, mobilising air power, paramilitary troops and artillery fire, began early

Friday in the rugged northwest tribal area, which is a vital supply route for US and Nato forces fighting across the border in Afghanistan, officials said.

"Frontier Corps troops killed 52 militants, targeted five hideouts and destroyed an ammunition dump and eight vehicles in Chapri

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