

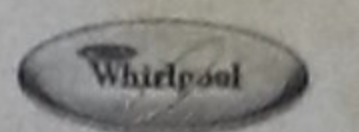


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PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Govt's rules change to rock WB aid flow

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

As the government has finalised some major amendments to the public procurement rules, the World Bank last week said adoption of these changes could jeopardise its project aid including budget support for Bangladesh.

To amend the Public Procurement Act/Rules (PPA)/(PPR), the government has finalised about 50 articles of the PPA and PPR for amendment. Once the PPA and PPR is amended, it will allow the government to award contracts for jobs involving up to Tk 2 crore through lottery and selection of contractor without any pre-qualifications.

The ambitious Annual Development Programme (ADP) for the next fiscal year is 33 percent higher than the revised budget of the current fiscal year. Fifty-four percent of the ADP funding is expected to come from foreign aid and a large chunk of that from the World Bank.

If the government makes these amendments to the PPA and PPR, the implementation of the ADP could be at risk.

The World Bank in a letter to the government for the second time expressed its serious opposition to six of the proposed amendments.

The letter, written by World Bank Country Director Xian Zhu last week, read, "Some of the specific proposed

changes in the existing provisions of PPR, being inconsistent with good procurement practices, could have serious implications for the bank's processing of future budget support operations and could restrict its ability to rely on the country system (PPA/PPR) in future operations."

The letter written to the Economic Relations Division (ERD) secretary also said, "In addition, over 80 percent of our ongoing operations rely on this country system for local procurement, and the agreements with the government of Bangladesh under these operations could be jeopardised."

Copies of the letter were sent to the

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Another BDR man dies of 'heart failure'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another jawan of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) of 46 rifles battalion died of heart failure at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) yesterday.

The deceased, Nayek Subedar Munshi Belal Hossain, 53, hailed from Khulna Sadar, was recruited in BDR in 1976.

With his demise, the number of unnatural death of BDR jawans rose to 27 since the February 25-26 mutiny at BDR headquarters in the capital.

A BDR press release said Belal went to Sapahar Thana Health Complex on May 30 from Radhanagar border outpost with fever. After treatment he was sent back to his duty station.

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PATIENTS' SUFFERINGS KNOW NO BOUND

DMCH finds huge food supply graft

SHAHEEN MOLLAH with ALPHA ARZU

Indoor patients at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) are getting apparently improved diet after being provided with rotten food for years thanks to rampant irregularities by the authorities and food suppliers.

DMCH Director Brig Gen Bazle Quader admitted the ill-practices that existed at the country's largest public hospital for long.

"We found huge corruption including supplying underweight, rotten and substandard food, which hampers the patients' nutritional status," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

"During a surprise visit at the kitchen I found those irregularities, though the government specifically instructed the suppliers about weight, nutritional measurements and volume of the food items."

The administration no longer takes food items that falls short of standard weight, height and nutrition, he added.

Sources from different wards, units and even patients and their attendants admitted that food standard improved in the past three days.

Rahima Begum, 20, a patient at Female Medicine Ward-21, said, "I came here on June 2 with kidney complications. I was upset getting substandard food like coarse rice, small piece of fish or meat as those were not sufficient for me."

"But surprisingly, I found quality food in the last three days."

Dr Bilkis Begum, consultant of Gynaecology of One-Stop Crisis Centre (OCC), said, "The patients now look happy with the food quality. Previously, they could not eat the supplied substandard food."

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WHOSE FOOTPATH IS IT, ANYWAY?



An air-conditioning unit of LabAid Diagnostic Centre occupying a part of the pavement along Green Road forces pedestrians to make a risky detour. LabAid authorities claim the seven-tonne device is waiting on their land to be lifted to the top floor. Usually, roads and pavements in the capital are under Dhaka City Corporation.

PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

Oli blamed for route chaos

He calls accusers liars

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

A whimsical decision by former communications minister Col (ret'd) Oli Ahmed in choosing the entry/exit points for the proposed Asian Highway (AH) that would go through Bangladesh, has been delaying the country's inclusion in the network, said experts.

The former minister chose a mountainous route, instead of a short and more viable one for all, without offering any explanation. His decision neither reflected the interest of Bangladesh nor did it help the interest of any other member-country of the network, rather the decision seems just a result of the erstwhile government's bias against India, the experts added.

But former communications minister Oli Ahmed emphatically denied the allegation to The Daily Star over the phone last night, calling the accusers 'liars'.

According to official records, the routes proposed by Bangladesh under the leadership of Oli Ahmed and finalised by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP), are AH1 that passes through

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Asian Highway routes get cabinet nod

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet yesterday decided in principle to sign the Asian Highway Network (AHN) agreement, accepting the proposed routes, and make Bangladesh a member of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP).

The proposed three routes of the AHN are Benapole-Jessore-Dhaka-Kanchpur-Sylhet-Tamabil-Banglabandha-Hatikamrul-Dhaka-Kanchpur-Sylhet-Tamabil and Mongla-Jessore-Dhaka-Kanchpur-Chittagong-Cox's Bazar-Teknaf-Myanmar border.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina chaired the cabinet

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Costly RPCL deal drains out \$25m

Dutch firm seeks \$28m more; restricted re-tender for power plant services

SHARIER KHAN

To renegotiate a costly and redundant past contract with a Dutch company, the Rural Power Company Ltd (RPCL) is holding a restricted re-tender for a long-term service agreement (LTSA) to run its three 70 megawatt

power units in Mymensingh.

If this re-tender produces price offers cheaper than that of the Dutch company, the RPCL will get the scope to save a lot of money required to carry out such a contract for inspection of RPCL's power units, and providing

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CTG PORT GRAFT JS body to hear Martin's version

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary sub-committee yesterday decided to summon former shipping adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) MA Martin to hear his version about the allegation of corruption against him in awarding contract of container handling at Chittagong port. The sub-committee formed by the parliamentary standing committee on shipping ministry at yesterday's meeting observed that there were anomalies in the tender process in awarding the contract to Eshak Brothers.

"In the preliminary investigation, it seems that massive corruption took place in the tender process," Shah Alam, chief of the sub-committee, told reporters after the meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

The sub-committee, however, did not fix any date for summoning the former adviser to attend before the committee. The former adviser awarded the contract to the company on January 6, 2009, on the last day of his office.

The members of the sub-committee alleged that Everest Enterprise was the lowest bidder in the tender and was qualified

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আপনার স্বপ্ন নীড়কে করুন সত্যি, আমাদের হোম লোন নিয়ে।

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• IAB will invite Architects of the nominated projects to submit details by August 10, 2009.



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