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Govt goes for more dredger purchase

Tender soon for three; 17 more to be procured in phases to dredge rivers

TAWFIQUE ALI

The government is going to procure three dredgers at a cost of Tk 105 crore as part of its recently conceived ambitious plan for river dredging.

Sources said the government will soon invite tender to procure three modern hydraulic dredgers. Seventeen more dredgers will be procured in phases.

"We will invite an open tender by next month for the procurement," said Nur-e-Alam Chowdhury, chairman of parliamentary standing committee on shipping ministry, while talking to The Daily Star.

The process of procuring 14 out of 17 dredgers has also been initiated, he said, adding that the approval from the Planning Commission may take three months before going for tender.

The government has not purchased any dredger after 1975.

Most of the rivers of the country have lost navigability due to encroachment and long-stalled dredging programmes, experts said.

The rivers surrounding Dhaka and those still

used as the routes of country's river communications will get priority for dredging, said Chowdhury.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) Chairman Md Abdul Mannan Howlader said that BIWTA is working on the schedule for re-tender to procure one dredger from the government's own fund.

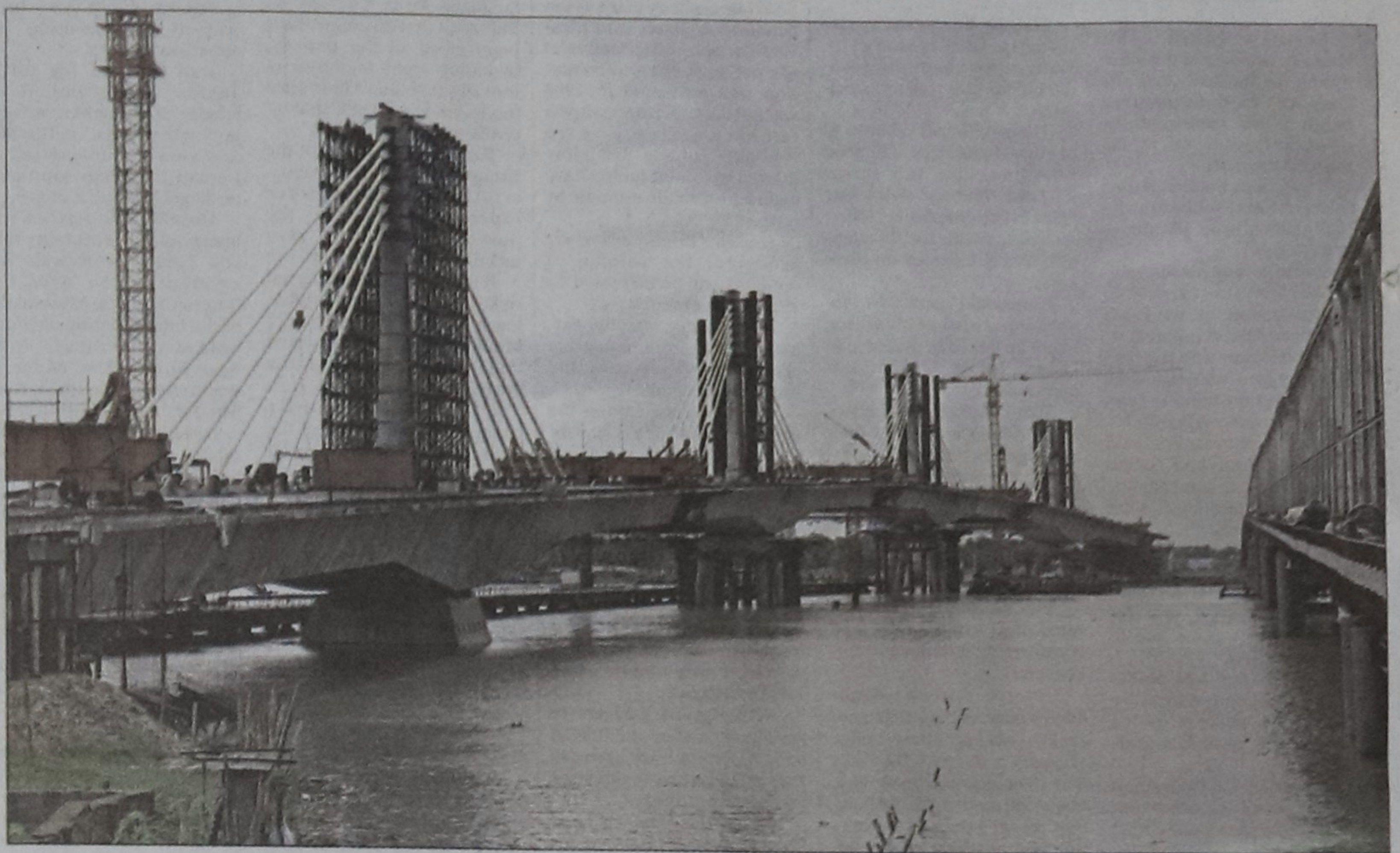
Besides, Japan Debt Cancellation Fund (JDCF) has granted Tk 170 crore to procure two more dredgers. Some ancillary equipment like tugboats would be procured from the JDCF fund.

It will take at least two years from now to procure the three dredgers. Those are likely to be purchased from the Netherlands. The existing seven dredgers were also brought from the same country.

The shipping ministry has already placed a draft project pro forma to the Economic Relations Division (ERD) for procurement of 17 more dredgers, sources said.

BIWTA has a fleet of only seven dredgers to excavate 6,000 kms of river route in the country

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The 950-metre Third Karnaphuli Bridge is nearing completion in Chittagong. The bridge construction started in August 2006 and is expected to end in mid 2010.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



UK minister for security due today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

UK Minister for Security and Counter-Terrorism Lord West will today arrive at Dhaka on a three-day visit to discuss with the prime minister, leader of the opposition and high government officials to

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Taxes on mobile, SIM should go

Economists, experts tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Imposing taxes on mobile phone sets and SIM cards will create impediments to fast expansion of information technology at a time when the government is trying to build a Digital Bangladesh, economists and information technology experts said yesterday.

They recommended withdrawing the 25 percent tax on mobile phone sets above a certain price and 15 percent VAT on Internet use so that a possible digital divide can be averted.

Imposing more taxes will increase smuggling of mobile phone sets while flawed policies might create a digital divide, observed the speakers at a seminar styled "Contribution of the proposed budget in building digital Bangladesh: the problems and gaps" organised by Dhansiri Media Production House at Sonargaon Hotel.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith assured the speakers of considering their demands and recommendations.

"Imposing 25 percent tax on mobile phone sets is suicidal," said Debapriya Bhattacharya, fellow of Centre for Policy Dialogue.

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BOGRA AMMO HAUL Trial stalled for over 4yrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Trials of four cases filed in connection with the recovery of one truckload of bullets in Kahu upazila of Bogra on June 27, 2003 remains stalled for about four and a half years.

A court had halted proceedings of the cases following an appeal by an accused.

Police also failed to find out all the persons who were behind the smuggling of the ammunition as the investigation into the cases were also suspended.

Police seized a truck loaded with 99,967 bullets of Chinese rifles and 174kg of explosives on the night of June 27, 2003. The truck was loaded from

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RENTAL POWER

Bogra plant still waits for equipment supply

One year passes after deadline

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

Power generation from 20-megawatt (MW) rental power plant in Bogra has become uncertain due to lack of required equipment.

Sources said private company Energy Prima Ltd, Dhaka started work of the power plant in February 2008 aiming at supplying power to the national grid by May the same year but it is yet to complete assembling of equipment in the plant.

Moazzem Hossain, chairman of Energy Prima Ltd, told this correspondent that the company management has decided to start power generation by next August although German company "Power International AG" is yet to supply all equipment as per the contract.

"According to the contract, the German company has to supply six engines and other equipment for the power plant. But it supplied five engines without required equipment," he said.

A senior official of Energy Prima Ltd, sister concern of Hosaf Group, said that a case was filed with the High Court against the German company in February this year to stop payment of US\$ 3.59 million for violating the contract.

Another case will be filed this week with a court in Singapore against the German company on charge of cheating, said the official. A discussion was held between the legal advisers of both the companies in Singapore a few days ago to solve the problem.

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LEARNING ENGLISH Star-Aktel programme in Rajshahi today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The Daily Star and Aktel will jointly launch an English language programme for secondary school-goers in Rajshahi divisional headquarters today.

Prof M Fazlul Bari, vice chancellor of Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology, will formally inaugurate the programme styled "English In Schools (EIS)" at Nanking Darbar Hall in the city at 11:00am.

Prof Dipakendra Nath Das, chairman of Rajshahi Education Board, will attend the ceremony as special guest.

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Mainul denies graft charge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former adviser to caretaker government barrister Mainul Hossain yesterday binned a parliamentary standing committee's allegation that he had allocated plots abusing power.

"The allegations lodged against me are false, baseless and motivated. No plot was allotted during the tenure of the last caretaker government," he said, while briefing newsmen at his Baridhara residence.

A five-member sub-committee was formed on Thursday to investigate alleged corruption of Mainul.

He said he had obtained a plot of Tejgaon Media Palli in the name of Robbar-New Nation Publications Group during the rule of BNP-Jamaat alliance government. The investigators will certainly examine the plot number, its

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Kafco official's decomposed body found

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police recovered the decomposed body of an official of Karnaphuli Fertiliser Company (Kafco) with bruises all over it from his own flat at Meem Tower under Panchlaish Police Station yesterday evening.

According to police, the victim was identified as Aurangzeb Hossain Mithu, 43, a sales officer of Kafco who had been missing since Wednesday.

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Hundreds of hilsa fry are captured with banned "current" nets during a period when the government prohibited hilsa fishing. The photo was taken at Fishery Ghat in Cox's Bazar Thursday.

13 killed in Baghdad market bombing

AFP, Baghdad

Iraq's main motorcycle market was hit by a bombing yesterday that killed 13 people and wounded more than 40, just four days before US soldiers pull out of cities, towns and villages nationwide.

Defence and interior ministry officials confirmed the toll and said the bomb went off around 9 am (0600 GMT) while people gathered at the market on the Muslim day of rest.

"A motorcycle exploded in the centre of a motorcycle market in Nahdha district, killing 13 people and wounding over 40," a security official said.

The blast was the latest in a

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Another BDR jawan dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) jawan was found dead yesterday inside a bathroom of a building at Pilkhana BDR headquarters.

New Market police said they recovered the body of Sepoy Rafiqul Islam of 33 Battalion at about 5:00pm hanging with a towel from a grill of a window of the bathroom on the fourth floor of RSB Lines Building.

With this death, a total of 30 BDR jawans have died since the February 25-26 BDR

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Watchdog trashes Iran polls dispute, terms it 'cleanest'

Defiant opposition to keep up protest despite pressure

AFP, Tehran

Iran's electoral watchdog insisted yesterday that this month's disputed presidential vote was the cleanest ever, rejecting opposition allegations of fraud that have brought hundreds of thousands onto the streets.

"After 10 days of examination, we did not see any major irregularities," Guardians Council spokesman Abbasali Kadkhodai told the official IRNA news agency.

"We have had no fraud in any presidential election and this one was the cleanest election we have had. I can say with certainty that there was no fraud in this election."

The council is expected to give its final ruling on Monday after supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei gave it an additional five days to investigate complaints filed by the defeated candidates.

Two weeks after the vote, protests in Tehran over hardliner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's re-election have receded after the

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OnlinePoll

Do you agree with Khaleda Zia's demand that govt should immediately take steps to investigate incidents of 'repression on politicians, businessmen and others' during emergency and try the responsible?

☐ Yes (60.5%)
☐ No (37.1%)
☐ No Comments (2.4%)

Total votes: 590

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think installing speed limiter in vehicles will reduce road accidents?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

Prayer Timing

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-05	5-40
Zohr	1-45	2-15
Asr	6-00	6-15
Maghrib	7-54	7-57
Esha	9-19	9-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

: সতর্কীকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি :

: ঢাকা ও চট্টগ্রাম মহানগরীতে সিএনজি অটোরিক্সার রেজিস্ট্রেশন বন্ধ সংক্রান্ত বিআরটিএ'র বিজ্ঞপ্তি :

এতদ্বারা সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, ঢাকা ও চট্টগ্রাম মহানগরীতে বর্তমানে সিএনজি অটোরিক্সার কোন রেজিস্ট্রেশন প্রদান করা হচ্ছে না। কাজেই এ বিষয়ে কেউ কারো দ্বারা প্রতারণিত হবেন না।

বাংলাদেশ রোড ট্রান্সপোর্ট অথরিটি (বিআরটিএ)

জিডি-৩১৯১