

## 3 new roads

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Mohammad Mainuddin said the project to construct a 5.33 km long and 20 feet wide road stretching from Hazaribagh Kalanagar to Bheribadh was sent back to the LGRD ministry from planning commission in 2008.

Recently, LGRD ministry asked DCC to submit the proposal to the ministry after revising the estimated cost.

"We have prepared the development project proforma (DPP) of the road, including some other components estimating the cost at Tk 11 crore, which was Tk 7.81 crore initially," he said, adding that they will submit the proposal soon.

The construction work of two roads—Star Gate Ramma to Janpath via Notre Dame College and Kamalapur and Hosaf Tower, Malibagh to Janpath, which were taken in 2005, are also yet to be started.

Rajuk constructed the road partially from Romna Gate to Notre Dame College but could not construct the road from Notre Dame College to Janpath via behind the Bangladesh Bank Colony as it is on land of other organisations, said an official at Rajuk.

The initiative of constructing the road remains uncertain also for not filling up a portion of retention area of the pumping station of Wasa at Janpath, he said.

The DPP of the Malibagh to Janpath road is in the housing ministry but it is yet to be approved as the alignment of the road has been changed under the draft of detailed area plan, said another official of Rajuk.

The construction work of 6.30 km long and 60 feet wide road stretching from Zia Colony of Dhaka cantonment to Mirpur cantonment via behind Section-12 of Mirpur has been going on since 2006.

The work will take yet more time to be completed though it was supposed to be completed by January 2008, sources said.

The works of Hatiwheel ring road is also going on, which is scheduled to be completed by June 2010.

Prof Muhibur Rahman of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology whose team conducted the feasibility study on the project said 70 percent work of road embankment has so far been completed (7km out of 11km) and the rest will be done by June 2010.

The land acquisition work except of a few places has

**Australia stops boat carrying 83 asylum seekers**

AFP, Sydney

A boat carrying 83 suspected asylum seekers was intercepted yesterday off Australia's northwest coast after being spotted from the air by a military patrol plane, officials said.

The vessel was spotted around midnight about 80 nautical miles south of Ashmore Island and initially appeared to be in distress, said Home Affairs Minister Brendan O'Connor.

"The people on board the vessel are safe and have indicated that they wish to come to Australia," he said. "Initial indications suggest 83 passengers and four crew are on board."

## 2 killed in 'shootouts'

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the passengers tried to escape defying them, Rab sources said. The criminals opened fire on the Rab personnel as the team chased them. The Rab team retaliated that ensued a gunfight.

After the incident, Shahar Ali was found bullet-hit in head at the spot and sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the doctor on duty declared him dead.

His accomplices, however, managed to flee the scene on microbus.

An assistant sub-inspector of Rab was also injured in the gunfire, Rab sources said.

Maj Khandaker Golam Sarwar of Rab-4 told The Daily Star that Ali was convicted in several cases including seven for murder with different police stations in the city.

There are cases against Ali for realizing extortions from Shenpara, Rokeya Sarani, Shewrapara, Kazipara and Monipur, he added.

Earlier, the authorities concerned issued a red notice through Interpol as he was in neighbouring countries at large for long time, police said.

In another incident, a notorious pirate of the Sundarbans was killed at about 12:30am on the bank of river Bhadra under Dakop upazila of Khulna district.

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already been done and it is expected to be completed after Ramadan, he said.

The excavation of the lake will also be done by June next year and the completion of the project will take time as it needed time to settle the embankment for constructing the road, he said.

Bijoy Sarani to Tejgaon road will again miss the timeline, as the construction of the overpass will not be completed by next December. The road is scheduled to be open in December this year.

It will take March 2010 to complete the whole work of the road while 70 percent work of overpass has already completed, said an official of Rajuk.

The 1,114metres long and 60 feet wide connecting road was inaugurated on December 16, 2008. But it was not open for public at that time as the overpass on railway line could not be completed and was supposed to be opened on March 26 this year, but Rajuk has missed the deadline and extended the time till December.

Construction work of a 300 feet wide road stretching from Kuri Biswa Road to Purbachal by Rajuk is also going on.

## Rainfall

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levels', Food and Disaster Management Minister Dr Abdur Razzaque said ground-water situation -- mainly gets recharged from rain and floodwater -- is completely different this year.

Postgraduate Programme in Disaster Management of BRAC University organized the seminar at BRAC Center Inn in collaboration with Kagawa University and Nagoya University, Japan and Bangla Sangstha.

According to water experts, country's annual groundwater table recedes by 5 metres due to lifting of water by tube wells, but one metre of that gap is recharged by rainfall within the country and four metres by floodwater.

The recharging is very crucial, as Boro rice, the main crop in the country now, is highly dependent on groundwater during dry season of the December-April tenure.

"Bangladesh is dependent on both surface water and groundwater, but 93 percent of surface water of Bangladesh comes across the border from China, Nepal, Bhutan and India," said Dr Razzaque, who is also an agriculturist by profession.

Referring to experts' view that withdrawal of water from the upstream by India will destroy Bangladesh's ecosystem, he said the government is discussing the issue with India.

He called upon the local and international experts to find out solutions to the problems that are arising out of climate change, which may affect millions of people.

BRAC University's Vice Chancellor Professor Jamilur Reza Choudhury, Center for Environmental and Geographic Information Services' (CEGIS) Executive Director Giasuddin Ahmed Chowdhury, Charge De Affaires of Japan in Dhaka Harumitsu Hida also spoke. Academics and students from Japan and Bangladesh took part in the seminar.

## Hill plunderers

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against the contractors engaged in levelling hills.

He also asked the authorities concerned to demolish the structures made by cutting hills, a UNB report said.

A huge portion of a 200-feet hill on around six acres of land adjacent to Baitul Aman residential area at North Khulshi has been levelled to make way for housing in last one month, sources said. A signboard at the spot reads that a mosque is under-construction. Locals informed that over 50 workers are involved in razing the hill allegedly owned by Major Solaiman.

Hasan Mahmud informed the reporters the government has decided to recruit around 450 officials to step up DOE operations across the country against hill cutting and environmental pollution.

Besides, he said, the government will set up DOE offices at district level.

He also informed that around 7.58 lakh acres of land across the country would be brought under social afforestation to ensure ecological balance.

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police stations.

On information, police went to the spot as a group of pirates were preparing for looting on Bhadra riverways, Officer-in-charge of Dakop Police Station Ziauzzam said. Police fired 13 rounds as they came under attack.

After the incident, Farukh was found dead on the spot.

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