

Expressway speeds up

Govt to buy 30 railcars for commuter service to ease jam; study on Dhaka-Ctg magnetic train service soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has directed the communications ministry to speed up the tender process for the contract to construct an elevated expressway in the capital.

Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain said this while replying to lawmakers' queries in parliament yesterday.

He said the government has taken steps to purchase 30 railcars to introduce commuter train service in efforts to ease traffic congestion in the city.

Besides, it has plans to have magnetic trains plying Dhaka-Chittagong route. Bangladesh Railway will soon commission a feasibility study to that end.

About bidding for the elevated expressway, the communications minister said the prime minister has instructed to expedite the process even if it takes relaxing some rules and regulations.

"The government won't be able to complete the work during its tenure if it should follow the rules and regulations to the letter," he continued.

The prime minister advised making things happen faster after a summary of the project was sent to her.

Abul Hossain said Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) would decide on the project proposal for the expressway on September 20.

On approval from Ecne, he added, the proposal will be placed before the cabinet, which may opt for relaxing the rules to avoid delays in getting the work started.

On modernisation of the railway, he said the government has taken a 20-year master plan for rail reforms. Planning Commission is drawing up the master plan.

The communications minister said the railway will soon start a service to sell train

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



A large number of pedestrians refuse to use the three footbridges at Farmgate and opt for crossing the busy Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in such free style, slowing down traffic and in cases grinding it to a halt.

PHOTO: SHAFIQU ALAM

JS to sue BNP trio

Decides to let ACC probe further Tk 2.5cr graft charge against Sircar, Akhtar Hamid, Delwar; but rejects proposal to cancel JS membership

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliament yesterday decided to recover money from former speaker Jamiruddin Sircar, his deputy Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui, and former chief whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain through legal actions, for their alleged misappropriation of the money as medical bills, additional fuel allowances, and other expenses during the last parliament.

According to a parliamentary probe committee, the amount of money misappropriated by the three is around Tk 2.50 crore.

The House also unanimously passed a resolution to send the matter to the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) for further investigation, and decided to inform the whole nation about the alleged irregularities committed by the trio.

It however rejected a recommendation for scrapping Sircar's membership in the parliament as Speaker Abdul Hamid said it would be too harsh an action.

"There is no clear provision for scrapping memberships on charges of corruption and irregularities, although the probe body and some lawmakers mentioned instances of cancellation of mem-

berships in the parliaments of the UK, Canada and India on similar charges," Hamid said.

The House also decided to cancel the appointments of all parliament secretariat staff who were appointed by Sircar allegedly ignoring the constitution and relevant rules, and decided to cancel allocations of houses to parliament secretariat staff on grounds of rules violation.

It also directed departmental actions against officials who were working in the selection committee for appointing the parliament secretariat staff.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

BANGABANDHU FAMILY Spl security bill passed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parliament yesterday passed a bill providing lifelong special security arrangement and secured residences to Sheikh Hasina, Sheikh Rehana and their children.

Main opposition BNP was absent in the House when the bill was passed. BNP lawmakers have remained out of the House since the budget session in June.

The Father of the Nation's Family Members Security Act, 2009 was passed yesterday. The previous Awami League government had enacted an almost similar bill in June.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

2 cases against Tarique, Ershad to be dropped

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday decided to withdraw an extortion case against Senior Joint Secretary General of BNP Tarique Rahman, and a corruption case against Jatiya Party Chairman and former president HM Ershad for misuse of state power.

The scrutiny committee formed for withdrawal of 'politically motivated' cases at its eighth meeting at the home ministry also recommended dropping 295 more cases against leaders of different political parties.

The case against Ershad was filed by the now-defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption on August 31, 1998.

The Tk 5 crore extortion case against Tarique was filed with Gulshan Police Station on May 13, 2007. He had applied to the scrutiny committee for withdrawing the case.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

BCL factions trade fire on DU campus

DU CORRESPONDENT

Two factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League exchanged at least 20 shots during a clash over giving shelter to a BCL activist at Haji Muhammad Mohsin Hall of Dhaka University early yesterday.

BCL activist Mohibullah was critically wounded in the incident and was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with injuries to his head and hands.

Mohsin Hall sources said the shots were fired within 10 to 15 minutes after the clash ensued at 1:45am creating

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



Barisal Fish Warehouse Operators' Association builds an arch in the divisional city welcoming Awami League leader Abul Hasnat Abdullah. Over 100 arches were set up in the city on the leader's return to Barisal after eight years.

PHOTO: STAR

Barisal develops Hasnat disorder

100 arches, posters, banners cover road to city as PM's cousin returns to home district today after 8 years

RAFIQU ISLAM, BARISAL

He is not a government functionary; nor is he a lawmaker from any local constituency or elsewhere. Still his party ruling Awami League decides to accord him a big-budget homecoming reception.

The AL and its front organisations have erected as many as 100 arches on a 46-kilometre-long road stretching from Madaripur to Barisal city. Barisal AL leaders and workers pasted hundreds of posters on all visible public places in the divisional headquarters and decorated the roadsides with colourful banners and festoons.

All these arrangements are meant for a rousing reception to ex-chief whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah, Barisal district AL secretary and a cousin of the prime minister, as he returns to his hometown after eight years.

Abdullah, who did not visit Barisal since October 1, 2001 and left the country prior to the 1/11 changeover and lived in self-exile in India with his daughter married off to an Indian national, would be accorded reception in Barisal city this afternoon.

Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan is scheduled to be present at the reception as the chief guest, AL presidium member Yusuf Hussain Humayun as the special guest while Barisal City Corporation Mayor Shawkat Hossain Hiron would chair the programme.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

3 ship-breakers die in Sitakunda

Poisonous gas causes the deaths

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Three workers died of gas inhalation at a ship-breaking yard at Sitakunda in Chittagong yesterday.

The victims are Emran Hossain, 25, Nasir Uddin, 25, and Mamun, 17. However, Mamun could not be traced as he was taken from government hospital to a private one, sources said.

They inhaled poisonous gas when they were cutting a vessel at Pakija Enterprise yard at Baro Awulia Fultala around 10:30am, sources said.

All of them were rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where the doctors on duty declared Emran dead. Of the two others, Nasir died just after he was admitted to the hospital while Mamun was reportedly taken to a private hospital by his co-workers.

"Mamun died on the way to hospital," confirmed Gias Uddin, sub-inspector of Sitakunda Police Station who is investigating the case.

Inhalation of poisonous gas caused the incident, said the doctors at CMCH.

The accident took place five days after three workers were smashed under a large iron-plate at Crystal Ship-breaking Yard on October 08.

With yesterday's death, around 14 workers died in accidents at ship-breaking yards this year, sources said.

A total of 18 workers were killed in 2006 and 2007 while 15 in 2008 itself, which shows increasing number of casualties.

Graft eating away stars

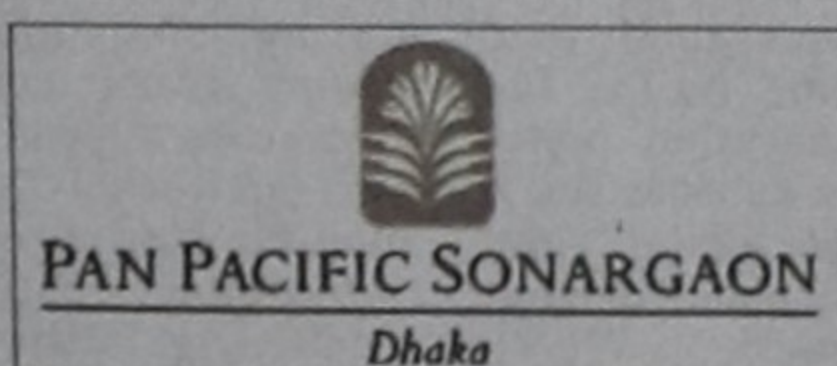
3 probes into corruption in Sonargaon Hotel renovation remain unfinished; graft whistleblowers shown the door

MD HASAN

Corruption allegations regarding renovation works of Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel in the capital remain ignored despite repeated whistle blowing for the last five years.

Rather, the whistle blowers were removed from the board or management body of the five star hotel.

Corruption in the hotel's renovation work was first exposed by a media report in 2007. It was alleged that Southeast Asia Technology Co. Ltd (SEATEC) of Thailand,



one of the consultancy firms for the work, did not submit designs in time but drew money illegally for the work that still remains unfinished.

Later, three committees were formed to unearth the facts but none of them completed probe for mysterious reasons

letting the consultant of the project and contractors off the hook.

Some board members have recently raised allegations of irregularities against SEATEC in the Tk 136 crore project.

But the members who brought the allegations were removed from the board on September 14 this year.

Anwar Rashid, a member of the board, alleged that his removal was linked to the demand for proper investigation into the allegations.

He was a member of a five-member

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

AUG 21 CASES Pintu to be quizzed at jail gate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed the authorities concerned to interrogate former BNP deputy minister Abdus Salam Pintu at the jail gate in the cases against him.

The court also asked the authorities to make arrangements for his treatment, if he (now in Dhaka Central Jail) is ill.

An HC bench comprised of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Pasha shot dead Begum Mujib, Jamal, 2 in-laws

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Quoting from a High Court (HC) verdict, Barrister Abdullah-al Mamun yesterday told the Supreme Court (SC) that Maj (ret'd) Aziz Pasha took a sten gun from the hands of Risaldar (ret'd) Moslemuddin and gunned down Begum Fajlatunnesa Mujib, wife of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, on August 15, 1975.

Aziz Pasha also killed Bangabandhu's son Sheikh Jamal and two daughters-in-law, Mamun added.

Sheikh Russell, youngest son of



erstwhile HC Division Judge ABM Khairul Haque, who is now at the Appellate Division of SC.

Mamun, a lawyer for convicts Maj (ret'd) Bazul Huda and Maj (ret'd) AKM Mohiuddin in Bangabandhu murder case, read out the verdict while placing a submission yesterday

SEE PAGE 7 COL 6