



METRO RAIL PROJECT

Ministry promotes same old company

Contractors to be invited for elevated expressway without feasibility study

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The communications ministry is pressing the government to entertain an unsolicited proposal for setting up metro rail system in the capital by a private local company that has no experience in doing anything close to a railway project.

The company was previously selected by BNP-Jamaat alliance government for the same job.

In a proposal sent to the cabinet committee for economic affairs for approval today (Tuesday), the ministry hammers in the costly and non-transparent pro-

posal on the plea of "saving time". However, at the same time, the ministry suggests that the government may alternatively float fresh tender inviting investment proposals from private investors.

But the ministry in its proposal to the cabinet notably promoted Contech Ltd that participated in a similar bid in 2002 but did not qualify to reach the second stage of the tender following evaluation by a government expert committee.

In 2006, through an unclear process, Contech re-submitted its proposal along with additional papers, which the cabinet committee accepted as an "unsolicited

proposal".

The ministry after three years has again proposed to allow the firm to submit its proposal as a pre-qualified bidder. Contech will submit technical and financial proposal through a two-envelope system (one for technical and one for financial). The company will also conduct feasibility study at its own initiative and financing, the proposal said.

The cabinet committee on economic affairs will make a decision on this matter today.

Even though there is no study to

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BASHUNDHARA Transcom chief, Prothom Alo editor file GDs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prothom Alo Editor Matjur Rahman, Transcom Group Chairman Latifur Rahman and Associate Editor of the newspaper Mizanur Rahman Khan have registered general diaries (GDs) with the police following the recent harassment and provocations by the Bashundhara Group.

They said Bashundhara may cause any untoward

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Samakal editor fears threat on life, files GD

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The daily Samakal Editor Golam Sarwar yesterday lodged a general diary (GD) with Tejgaon Industrial Area Police Station expressing apprehension that Bashundhara Group or its people might kill him and try to implicate him in false cases.

Mentioning the GD Bashundhara Group filed against him and Samakal

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Drive against polythene resumes

Shopkeepers fined

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Environment (DoE) yesterday conducted a drive in the capital against the sale and storage of banned polythene shopping bags after a long break of about two years.

A mobile court led by DoE Director (Dhaka) Jamshed Ahmed fined 22 storeowners

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Rid Pharma boss lands in jail

Court rejects his bail prayer as 28 children died after taking Rid's toxic paracetamol syrup

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court sent Managing Director of Rid Pharmaceuticals Limited Mizanur Rahman to jail yesterday in a case filed for manufacturing toxic paracetamol syrup that claimed lives of at least 28 children across the country.

Judge ANM Bashir Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order after Mizanur surrendered before the court. He said charges were brought against him because of his "heinous" acts and rejected his bail prayer.

He had a role in the preparation of paracetamol syrup that led to the death of the infants, the judge added.

The children died between June and August of renal failures due to intake of paracetamol

syrup produced by Rid Pharmaceutical Company situated in Brahmanbaria's BSCIC area.

On August 11, the Drug Court had issued warrants to arrest Mizanur, two directors and two pharmacists of the company after Drug Superintendent Shafiqul Islam filed the case with the court under Drug Control Act.

On receipt of the warrants, Brahmanbaria police launched a drive to arrest them but they failed to do so as they were hiding.

However, Mizanur Rahman with his wife Sheuly Rahman, one of the directors, appeared before the High Court on August 18 and sought anticipatory bail. The HC directed him to surrender before the Metropolitan Sessions

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Raja Mia is handcuffed to his bi-cycle at the city's Mohammadpur Krishi Market yesterday morning after a mobile court held him for selling banned polythene bags to shops.

PHOTO: SHAFIQU ALAM

EC cleared Jasim on legal opinion of army

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Election Commission (EC) sought and depended on opinion of the army's judge advocate general to allow Awami League candidate Maj (ret'd) Jasim Uddin in the national polls before five years of his compulsory retirement.

The EC, based on the same opinion, also rejected an appeal filed by BNP candidate Maj (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed against acceptance of Jasim's candidacy by the returning officer, according to the EC's order on the appeal.

"We wrote to the judge advocate general seeking his opinion on the issue. We relied on the opinion to decide the dispute over Jasim Uddin's candidacy," Election Commissioner Muhammed Sohul Hussain told reporters yesterday at his office.

Referring to the Supreme Court's Sunday's verdict declaring illegal the EC's decision, Sohul said, "We will be able to clearly understand the findings of the court to declare our decision illegal after going through the verdict."

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Excessive foreign trips hampering official functions

Govt alerts ministers, bureaucrats

UNB, Dhaka

Irked by too many foreign trips by ministers or state ministers along with secretaries, the government has ordered them to desist from such overseas tours that hamper official functions.

The government also has discouraged top bureaucrats from going abroad frequently in the name of seminars and symposiums. Instead, "junior or mid-level officials have to be given priority for attending such foreign functions," says a circular from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

Signed by Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister M Abdul Karim, the recent circular carried the government view that this kind of foreign trips are slowing down pace of government activities.

It was recently seen that some ministers or state ministers and secretaries and acting secretaries are going abroad at a time. "Sometimes, the high officials are going abroad for a seminar or

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HC appoints 2 amici curiae on CHT issue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday appointed two senior lawyers as amici curiae (friends of court) for expert opinions during the hearing on the HC rules regarding the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord.

The amici curiae are advocate TH Khan and barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud.

The HC bench of Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed and Justice Moeenul Islam Chowdhury also fixed October 22 for hearing the rules.

In 2000 and 2007, Badiuzzaman, Bangalee settler in CHT, and Tajul Islam, pro-Jamaat-e-Islami lawyer,

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NCTB warehouse fire still on

Textbook production to delay, but distribution will be on time; minister smells 'sabotage'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The fire at the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) warehouse will not cause any delay in distribution of textbooks among students, although it burnt and damaged much of 1,700 tonnes of printing paper kept at the warehouse, said top officials of the board yesterday.

Meanwhile, firefighters from five units of the fire department, including its headquarters, were struggling hard to douse the fire which was still on at the time of filing this report at 8:00pm yesterday.

"The production might be delayed by a maximum of two weeks, but the distribution will not be delayed," said Chairman of NCTB Prof Md Mostafa Kamaluddin, "The fire did not burn the piles of ready textbooks stocked on the first floor."

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid too said distribution of the textbooks on time will not be a problem.

He told The Daily Star yesterday that the fire might have been

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Godown left in untidy condition

Lacks safety measures

TAWFIQUE ALI

Stockpiling textbooks and printing papers at the warehouse of National Curriculum and Textbook Board in Tejgaon was done improperly and not following safety measures.

The ground floor of the warehouse caught fire Sunday morning and 1,700 tonnes of printing papers worth at least Tk 14 crore was destroyed and damaged.

The heavily stocked warehouse naturally generated immense amount of heat and fume making it extremely difficult to bring the fire under control, said high officials of Fire Service and Civil Defence.

"Proper and basic stacking principles were not followed,"

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New reform body on the cards

It will implement RRC recommendations, says finance minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government considers forming a high-powered body to implement recommendations of the Regulatory Reform Commission (RRC) and further strengthening other bodies like the Board of Investment (BoI), said Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday.

"We are thinking of a different body to reform the entire system and are proceeding to that end," Muhith said after a meeting with newly appointed Japanese Ambassador Tamotsu Shinotsuka at his Secretariat office.

Replying to a query, the finance minister told reporters the immediate past caretaker government formed RRC to amend the old rules and regulations, adding there was a need to form such a commission.

He added, "Their recommendations are lying

with us. There are many good recommendations in it. We will implement those in phases."

Muhith also said BoI and the Privatisation Commission remained ineffective for the last two to three years. The government is thinking of a separate body to strengthen BoI, Privatisation Board and other agencies and to implement the RRC recommendations, he added.

The caretaker government in October 2007 formed the 17-member RRC with former adviser to the caretaker government Akbar Ali Khan as chairman to amend the old rules and regulations, which were impediment to trade and commerce.

Akbar Ali on October 15 resigned from the post of RRC chairman alleging that he was not getting government cooperation.

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SC reprimands Huda's counsel

Court annoyed with his irrelevant arguments, misleading media

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday reprimanded barrister Abdullah-al Mamun, counsel for two of the five convicts in Bangabandhu assassination case, for placing irrelevant arguments before the court and giving wrong information to the media about it.

The five-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Justice Md Tafazzul Islam expressed annoyance with Mamun for repeating his arguments and directed him to finish his arguments today.

Mamun, who told the media on Sunday that the court obstructed him from placing arguments, apologised to the court for his remarks.

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FREEDOM FIGHTERS Service age extended by 2 years

Pvt university law okayed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday extended the service age of the freedom-fighter officials and employees of the country by two years, which implies that the retirement age has been extended from 57 to 59 years.

To this effect, the cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina approved the Public Service (retirement) (amendment) Bill 2009.

With the approval of the bill, those who have been on LPR would also enjoy the

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