



TK 15,000 CRORE METRO RAIL, ELEVATED EXPRESSWAY

## Open tender gets nod

Project to start in 6 months; Second four-lane Dhaka-Ctg highway okayed

REJAU KARIM BYRON

Rejecting the communications ministry's proposal for considering an unsolicited tender offer, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs yesterday okayed the ministry's other recommendation for floating an open invitation for tenders for construction of a metro rail and an elevated expressway in the capital at an estimated cost of Tk 15,000 crore.

The committee however gave permission to the ministry to select pre-qualified investors through the open tender for final selections.

It also okayed the same process for selecting a contractor for constructing a second four-lane Dhaka-Chittagong national highway.

But at the same time it also made an alternative suggestion for constructing an elevated four-lane Dhaka-Chittagong expressway, instead of the second land based national highway, in a bid to avoid requisition of arable lands, meeting sources said. The ministry was asked to come up with an estimated cost of constructing the elevated national expressway, the sources added.

The committee also gave a go-ahead to the foreign ministry for conducting a seismic survey in the Bay of Bengal, and decided that the shipping ministry will prepare a preliminary project pro forma for seeking assistance from development partners for construction of a deep-sea port.

The decisions came from a committee meeting yesterday held at the Cabinet Division with Finance Minister AMA Muhiut in the chair.

Communications Minister Abul Hossain told the committee that the ministry intends to complete selecting the pre-qualified bidders for both the Dhaka expressway and metro rail projects within three months, and award the contracts within six months.

To save time during the selection process, the committee also approved waiver of some bidding procedures spelled out by the Private Infrastructure Committee, Major Terms & Conditions Committee, and Bangladesh Private Sector Infrastructure Guidelines.

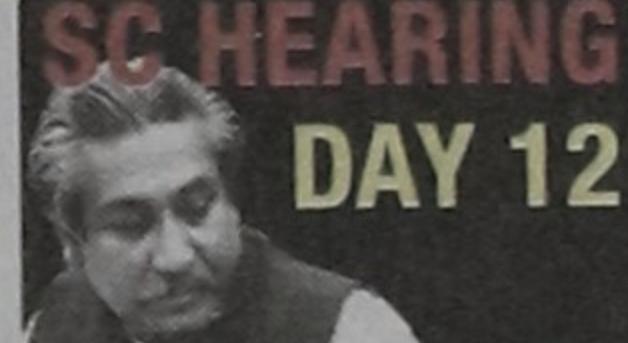
After the meeting, Cabinet Secretary Abdul Aziz told reporters that the ministry was told to proceed for selecting pre-qualified investors following appropriate rules.

In the meeting the communications ministry placed two

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**No conspiracy; it was army revolt**  
*Claims counsel for convicted killer Huda*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



The August 15 killings were a revolt by army men, not any conspiracy, and the case should be tried afresh by a military court, a lawyer for Bangabandhu murderer convicts told the Supreme Court yesterday.

Abdullah-al Mamun, counsel for Bazlul Huda and AKM Mohiuddin, claimed all army personnel supported the revolt so that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman could not make a particular announcement at a programme on Dhaka University campus on August 15, 1975.

Summing up his arguments, he said their intention was not to kill Bangabandhu, then president of the republic, or his family.

Mamun contended the real culprits would have been unmasked, had this case been tried under the army act. Now they would remain untouched if a few including his clients are sentenced to death.

He said a simmering conflict between the then army chief Major General Shafullah and senior official Brigadier Khaled Mosharraf, discontent among the ranks for dismissal of Col Abu Taher and Lt Col Ziauddin and formation of Rakhi Bahini--all

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## Saarc nations to set up 50 weather watch stations

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Enhancing cooperation to tackle the climate change impacts, the Saarc countries yesterday decided to set up 50 automatic weather monitoring stations in Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan to carry out study on weather pattern, especially storms, in the region.

India would help set up the weather stations in the three countries, said Indian Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh at the meeting of the Saarc environment ministers here.

The meeting, attended by State Minister for Environment and Forest Hasan Mahmud, among others, also decided to establish a forestry centre and a natural disaster management system for the region.

Taking on the role of a donor in the area of climate, India decided to extend a grant of one million dollars for strengthening the Saarc forestry centre in Thimphu, Bhutan while another one million dollars for the coastal zone management centre in the Maldives.

Ramesh said the Saarc environment treaty and the natural disaster rapid response mechanism are expected to be finalised and adopted at the Saarc summit in Thimphu in April next year.

He said six key decisions were taken by the Saarc ministers to tackle global warming, which included holding of an annual workshop to review climate change actions by each of the eight member nations.

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