



Padma bidding in Feb

Donors to give \$2.25b out of \$2.4b total cost for bridge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday decided to invite tenders in February for construction of the Padma Bridge as international donors pledged to provide almost 100 percent funding for the project.

The decision was taken at a coordination meeting of the project with Finance Minister AMA Muhiith in the chair.

The Economic Relations Division (ERD) informed the meeting that the donors agreed to provide \$2.25 billion of the total construction cost of \$2.4 billion. The remaining amount will come from the government coffer. The donors recently increased their earlier funding commitment by about 101 percent.

After the meeting the finance minis-

ter told journalists, "Now there is no shortfall in funding for the Padma Bridge construction. So we will hold a coordination meeting with the lead donor next month, and invite tenders in February."

Initially the total construction cost had been estimated at \$1.4 billion, which was re-estimated at \$2.4 billion after the final study, Muhiith said.

The World Bank (WB) made a commitment to provide \$1.2 billion, increasing its earlier commitment of \$460 million. ERD officials said the full amount of the WB funding will be in soft loan.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) committed to provide \$550 million increasing its earlier commitment of \$300 million. Five hundred million of the ADB money will come as commer-

cial loan and the remaining will be in soft loan.

Japan also raised its commitment to \$300 million in soft loan from its earlier pledge of \$200 million. Japan Debt Cancellation Fund (JDCF) will channel an additional \$41.48 million as grant to the project from Bangladesh's debt owed to that country.

Islamic Development Bank will give \$130 million, and Abu Dhabi Development Fund will provide \$31.40 million as loans.

Yesterday's meeting also discussed who will work as the lead donor. The finance minister said the lead donor will be selected in consultation with the prime minister.

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Govt moves to withdraw Tarique's case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The government for the first time initiates withdrawal of an extortion case against BNP Senior Vice-Chairman Tarique Rahman on grounds that it is 'politically motivated' and meant for 'harassment'.

The prosecution will submit a petition with the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in the first week of January next year seeking its withdrawal.

The case was filed on May 4, 2007 with Gulshan Police Station accusing businessman Giasuddin Al Mamun of extorting Tk 2.20 crore from an entrepreneur.

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Rental power bid faces uncertainty

Govt struggles with 2,600MW new power tenders

SHARIER KHAN

Most of the new power generation initiatives for a total of 2,600 megawatt are facing long delays and uncertainty mainly due to interference from different quarters and indecision of the implementing agencies.

The Power Development Board's (PDB's) bid to award eight costly diesel and heavy fuel oil (HFO)-fired rental power contracts within last month has already failed.

A set of recommendations for awarding five out of eight of these contracts was sent to the Cabinet Purchase Committee earlier this month twice, but the committee declined to consider approval of these. The recommendations will be placed before the committee again tomorrow.

This means the government's goal of easing power crisis in the next irrigation period would be severely compromised. The PDB had opted for these rental power projects of 530 MW capacity so that half of them can be launched by March next year to ensure power supply for irrigation.

"Whether this bid fails or not, this is the last time PDB is going to float tender for rental power projects," said a PDB top official, frus-

trated at its failure to ensure a tender process free from questions and different lobbies' pressure to award the contracts to certain groups.

Under pressure from the higher authorities and business groups, the PDB had relaxed bidding criteria to make way for firms without proven experience.

The October 29 tender drew many offers, with bidders having no proven records making the lowest bids. The PDB tender committee made its recommendations about five project sites amid pressure from lobbies and disagreements with many officials, but it could not decide anything on three sites till date.

The tender committee recommended awarding contracts for Bheramara 100 MW diesel-fired and Noapara 100 MW HFO-fired plants to the country's furniture giant Otobi, Thakurgaon 50 MW diesel and Jamalpur 30 MW HFO plants to top battery manufacturer Rahimafrooz and Barisal 50 MW HFO plant to new local company Coastal Saba.

The committee did not take any decision on Syedpur 50 MW and Katakhali 100 MW diesel-fired plants where local power company Asian Entech had made the lowest bid. Asian Entech

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Until the signal turns red, police officials hold a rope fencing to prevent pedestrians from crossing the road. The photo was taken at Hotel Sonargaon intersection in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: SHAFIQU ALAM

Charge framing in Feni BDR trial Jan 24

A CORRESPONDENT, Feni

A special court of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) yesterday fixed January 24 next year for framing charges against 62 accused BDR men in a mutiny case of the district.

The court also adjourned the trial proceedings till the date.

The Bangladesh Rifles Special Court-3 led by its Director General Maj Gen Mainul Islam fixed the date during the proceedings of the case.

The 62 BDR men were taken to the 19 Rifle Battalion Headquarters at 8:30 am and produced before the court.

During the 30 minutes proceedings that started at about 10:00am, Prosecutor Lt

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ETP found inactive

Mobile court prepares to sue Tongi industries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court of the Department of Environment in a drive in Tongi and Konabari yesterday found the effluent treatment plant (ETP) of an industry inoperative and another running without any ETP.

The team led by Jamshed Ahmad, director of DoE, Dhaka division, initiated filing cases against the industries that are discharging untreated industrial wastes into the water bodies in Tongi and Konabari.

The mobile court found the ETP of Orbit Processing Mills Ltd

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Birthday gift for Trishna, Krishna Leave hospital

AFP, Sydney

Formerly conjoined Bangladeshi twins Trishna and Krishna left hospital yesterday after Australian doctors who separated their fused brains decided they should celebrate

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PHOTO ON PAGE 6

Pak courts face off with govt

Graft cases revived against interior minister, hundreds of officials

AFP, BBC Online, Islamabad

Pakistani prosecutors were reviving graft cases yesterday against Interior Minister Rehman Malik and hundreds of officials, setting the stage for a showdown with a shaky government.

President Asif Ali Zardari, four cabinet ministers and 8,000 bureaucrats, politicians, businessmen and others may face legal action after the Supreme Court annulled a two-year amnesty

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