

Machine-readable

FROM PAGE 1

Steps to introduce MRPs and MRVs originally began 12 years ago. Several influential quarters comprising politicians and entrepreneurs had been in a race for grabbing the contract since then, contributing to the project's delay.

With only two months left for starting the switch over involving sophisticated technology, Bangladesh is sure to have a hard time meeting the deadline.

But the project director is upbeat, who said they will complete the remaining formalities expeditiously. It will take them at least two weeks to sign the contract, which will be followed by the task of bringing in the hardware and software, and their installation, he added.

The project director is however hoping to start introducing the MRPs and MRVs on April 1 by bringing in some portable machines temporarily, while the larger set up is still being installed.

"I have already held a meeting with IRIS and requested them to arrange for some portable machines," Brig Gen Refayet said adding that he and his team did their level best to finalise the project proposal for approval. "Unfortunately, it took a little longer than expected," he added.

The government in July last year invited tender for the project with a deadline of October 27 of the same year. A total of eight firms submitted their bids, which are Muhlbauer ID Service GmbH, IRIS Corporation Berhad, Flora Telecom Ltd, Oberthur Technologies, BJ&C Security Printing Company Ltd, ST Electronics, Smart Cube Information System, and Sasha Denim.

An evaluation committee headed by the project director, also comprising officials from the home ministry, immigration and passport department, police, and the army on

February 23 selected IRIS as the most responsive firm. Flora Telecom Ltd was selected as the second most responsive firm.

A home ministry official said, "IRIS won the tender with a quotation of 267 crore taka, beating Flora Telecom that quoted 347 crore taka."

According to a requirement of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), Bangladesh must start introducing MRPs and MRVs from April 1 to ensure safe and risk-free foreign travel for its citizens. Otherwise, Bangladeshi citizens' access to international manpower markets and to all types of visas might be at risk after April 1. Students seeking to study abroad are also likely to be sufferers.

The government in July last year invited tender for the project with a deadline of October 27 of the same year. A total of eight firms submitted their bids, which are Muhlbauer ID Service GmbH, IRIS Corporation Berhad, Flora Telecom Ltd, Oberthur Technologies, BJ&C Security Printing Company Ltd, ST Electronics, Smart Cube Information System, and Sasha Denim.

An evaluation committee headed by the project director, also comprising officials from the home ministry, immigration and passport department, police, and the army on

February 23 selected IRIS as the most responsive firm. Flora Telecom Ltd was selected as the second most responsive firm.

A home ministry official said, "IRIS won the tender with a quotation of 267 crore taka, beating Flora Telecom that quoted 347 crore taka."

According to a requirement of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), Bangladesh must start introducing MRPs and MRVs from April 1 to ensure safe and risk-free foreign travel for its citizens. Otherwise, Bangladeshi citizens' access to international manpower markets and to all types of visas might be at risk after April 1. Students seeking to study abroad are also likely to be sufferers.

The project director is however hoping to start introducing the MRPs and MRVs on April 1 by bringing in some portable machines temporarily, while the larger set up is still being installed.

"I have already held a meeting with IRIS and requested them to arrange for some portable machines," Brig Gen Refayet said adding that he and his team did their level best to finalise the project proposal for approval. "Unfortunately, it took a little longer than expected," he added.

The project director is however hoping to start introducing the MRPs and MRVs on April 1 by bringing in some portable machines temporarily, while the larger set up is still being installed.

"I have already held a meeting with IRIS and requested them to arrange for some portable machines," Brig Gen Refayet said adding that he and his team did their level best to finalise the project proposal for approval. "Unfortunately, it took a little longer than expected," he added.

The project director is however hoping to start introducing the MRPs and MRVs on April 1 by bringing in some portable machines temporarily, while the larger set up is still being installed.

"I have already held a meeting with IRIS and requested them to arrange for some portable machines," Brig Gen Refayet said adding that he and his team did their level best to finalise the project proposal for approval. "Unfortunately, it took a little longer than expected," he added.

The project director is however hoping to start introducing the MRPs and MRVs on April 1 by bringing in some portable machines temporarily, while the larger set up is still being installed.

"I have already held a meeting with IRIS and requested them to arrange for some portable machines," Brig Gen Refayet said adding that he and his team did their level best to finalise the project proposal for approval. "Unfortunately, it took a little longer than expected," he added.

The project director is however hoping to start introducing the MRPs and MRVs on April 1 by bringing in some portable machines temporarily, while the larger set up is still being installed.

"I have already held a meeting with IRIS and requested them to arrange for some portable machines," Brig Gen Refayet said adding that he and his team did their level best to finalise the project proposal for approval. "Unfortunately, it took a little longer than expected," he added.

The project director is however hoping to start introducing the MRPs and MRVs on April 1 by bringing in some portable machines temporarily, while the larger set up is still being installed.

"I have already held a meeting with IRIS and requested them to arrange for some portable machines," Brig Gen Refayet said adding that he and his team did their level best to finalise the project proposal for approval. "Unfortunately, it took a little longer than expected," he added.

The project director is however hoping to start introducing the MRPs and MRVs on April 1 by bringing in some portable machines temporarily, while the larger set up is still being installed.

"I have already held a meeting with IRIS and requested them to arrange for some portable machines," Brig Gen Refayet said adding that he and his team did their level best to finalise the project proposal for approval. "Unfortunately, it took a little longer than expected," he added.

The project director is however hoping to start introducing the MRPs and MRVs on April 1 by bringing in some portable machines temporarily, while the larger set up is still being installed.

"I have already held a meeting with IRIS and requested them to arrange for some portable machines," Brig Gen Refayet said adding that he and his team did their level best to finalise the project proposal for approval. "Unfortunately, it took a little longer than expected," he added.

The project director is however hoping to start introducing the MRPs and MRVs on April 1 by bringing in some portable machines temporarily, while the larger set up is still being installed.

"I have already held a meeting with IRIS and requested them to arrange for some portable machines," Brig Gen Refayet said adding that he and his team did their level best to finalise the project proposal for approval. "Unfortunately, it took a little longer than expected," he added.

The project director is however hoping to start introducing the MRPs and MRVs on April 1 by bringing in some portable machines temporarily, while the larger set up is still being installed.

"I have already held a meeting with IRIS and requested them to arrange for some portable machines," Brig Gen Refayet said adding that he and his team did their level best to finalise the project proposal for approval. "Unfortunately, it took a little longer than expected," he added.

The project director is however hoping to start introducing the MRPs and MRVs on April 1 by bringing in some portable machines temporarily, while the larger set up is still being installed.

"I have already held a meeting with IRIS and requested them to arrange for some portable machines," Brig Gen Refayet said adding that he and his team did their level best to finalise the project proposal for approval. "Unfortunately, it took a little longer than expected," he added.

The project director is however hoping to start introducing the MRPs and MRVs on April 1 by bringing in some portable machines temporarily, while the larger set up is still being installed.

"I have already held a meeting with IRIS and requested them to arrange for some portable machines," Brig Gen Refayet said adding that he and his team did their level best to finalise the project proposal for approval. "Unfortunately, it took a little longer than expected," he added.

Dredging

FROM PAGE 16

strengthen the local government system.

It is also planning to set up 18,000 more health service centres throughout the country in phases to reach the healthcare to the doorsteps of the people.

Besides, the government has plans to promote better governance and introduce performance based career planning to reform the civil service.

After yesterday's meeting, Finance Minister AMA Muhith told journalists the BDF meeting would be held in six sessions. The issues of governance, corruption, energy, power, agriculture, digital Bangladesh, water resources and river dredging will be discussed at the meeting, the ministers said.

Muhith added the matters relating to the government's plan for future development will be presented before the development partners and their assistance would be sought.

According to the draft report, the government's resource gap would be \$12.5 billion in three fiscal years. The government expects to receive \$2-\$2.5 billion in foreign assistance per year from the development partners.

The rest would be collected from public-private partnership, foreign direct investment (FDI) and increased government revenue.

Murder convict

FROM PAGE 1

fled to the capital from his Charchakandi village of Palong upazila in Shariatpur district soon after the killing took place on March 27, 1990 in the village.

Major Khandakar Golam Sarwar of Rab-4 told The Daily Star that acting on a tip-off a Rab team led by DAD Selim Reza arrested Siraj around 2:30pm on the street in front of Dhaka Judge's Court when Siraj was leaving the court for his residence.

Siraj had been arrested following the murder of farmer Mojammel in a clash between two groups of villagers over selection of candidate for Union Parishad chairman. Siraj got out on bail after eight months in jail.

A Shariatpur court awarded him life term in September 1997 for the murder. Siraj appealed with the High Court against the verdict, but the HC upheld the trial court's verdict on May 25, 2005, Siraj said.

"Coming out on bail, I fled to the capital, studied law and started practising at Dhaka Judge's Court and also became a member of Dhaka Bar in 1996. After the High Court upheld the verdict in 2005, I did not surrender," Siraj told The Daily Star.

In reply to a question, Siraj said, "If I had surrendered and appealed to the Supreme Court, I would have been sent to jail... My family—my wife and two minor daughters—in the city's Gendaria depends on me, so I had to continue my illegal practice."

When contacted, Dhaka Bar Secretary Gazi Mohammad Shah Alam told The Daily Star that as acquiring a certificate to become a lawyer does not need police verification, it gives criminals like Siraj scopes to be lawyers.

To be a member of a bar, it only needs an affidavit that the membership seeker has no affiliation to other profession, he added.

Siraj took both the chances and became a lawyer and a member of the bar, Shah Alam said, adding that he would take steps to cancel Siraj's membership.

Teenage gang

FROM PAGE 1

immediately how much gold was looted from the vault.

Sub-inspector Gazi Ataur Rahman of Kotwali police station said they visited the spot and recovered two cartridges.

He however suspects no gold ornaments were looted.

He however suspects no gold ornaments were looted.

He however suspects no gold ornaments were looted.

He however suspects no gold ornaments were looted.

He however suspects no gold ornaments were looted.

He however suspects no gold ornaments were looted.

He however suspects no gold ornaments were looted.

He however suspects no gold ornaments were looted.

He however suspects no gold ornaments were looted.

He however suspects no gold ornaments were looted.

Aziz Pasha

FROM PAGE 1

Several hundred leaders and workers of the AL led by Harirampur upazila Chairman and AL leader Dewan Saidur Rahman came to Aziz Pasha's house at Sreebari in Ghior by about 200 motorcycles.

Defying police obstruction, they ransacked the house of Alam Pasha, Aziz Pasha's brother. At one stage they set the house on fire.

The police doused the fire soon.

Later, the AL leaders and activists held a rally on Shibbalaya Upazila Parishad premises and hanged an effigy of Aziz Pasha there.

District AL president Golam Mohiuddin, freedom fighter commander Momin Ullah Khan, and local AL leaders Dewan Abdul Rauf, Abdul Quddus, Tushar Kanti Tapu and Bhajan Sarkar spoke at the rally.

The speakers called for boycotting the relatives of Aziz Pasha socially.

After the attackers left Alam Pasha's house, his son Arafat Pasha told journalists that they have no relation with the family of Aziz Pasha.

Arafat said Aziz Pasha does not have any property in Sreebari since his father bought Aziz Pasha's property after his death in Zimbabwe in June 2001. Arafat demanded that the government provide security to his family.

After the killing of Bangabandhu, Aziz Pasha and his brother Alam bought the house of Jitendra Lal Basu in Sreebari and started living there. When an arrest warrant was issued against Aziz in 1997 Ghior police seized the house, sources said.

UK suspends

FROM PAGE 1

application centres in Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet," said a British High Commission press release.

Those with scheduled appointments to submit Tier 4 visa applications at visa application centres from 1 February will be given priority once the suspension is lifted.

The UK Border Agency's Regional Director, Chris Dix, said, "The visa operation will continue to work hard to process the student applications that we have received so far and to ensure they all meet the required standard."

He added, "The UK Border Agency remains committed to providing an efficient visa operation for all our customers. We aim to process applications fairly, thoroughly and as quickly as possible. We will also take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the visa operation works effectively."

Applications under other visa categories will not be affected by the suspension.

Stuart Percival, UKBA Operations Manager at the British High Commission in Dhaka, said, "I am keen that genuine students from Bangladesh continue to study at high quality institutions in the UK."

"This temporary measure is designed to protect genuine students, professional agents and good education providers."

"We will continue to review the situation and hope that a normal visa service will be resumed for genuine students who want to study in the UK."

Shady plot sale

FROM PAGE 16

When his attention was drawn to the IO's primary findings, the minister said, "My sister-in-law's son is a professor at a local women's college. Why should he attack Sanjeeb?"

Sanjeeb alleged that he was targeted for raising voice against the sale of the plot, which was allotted to the Tribal Welfare Association as non-transferable land during the tenure of the Ershad-led government.

Mankin admitted that the land meant for the Association had been sold but claimed that it has no link with the attack on Sanjeeb.

He said they sold the land in Mirpur after taking permission from the authorities concerned to end a longstanding dispute over its possession.

"Later, we bought land for the Tribal Welfare Association in Mymensingh town with the money. I founded the Association in 1977, which now has 40 branches across the country," said the state minister.

Mankin's brother-in-law Supen Tozu denied the allegation of his involvement in the attack.

"Sanjeeb Drong is trying to confuse people and tarnish the state minister's image by raising the issue of land dispute," Supen alleged.

Remon Arang told our Netrakona correspondent that Sanjeeb brought a false allegation against Supen and him. They were not involved in the incident, he claimed.

They were not involved in the incident, he claimed.

They were not involved in the incident, he claimed.

They were not involved in the incident, he claimed.

They were not involved in the incident, he claimed.

They were not involved in the incident, he claimed.

They were not involved in the incident, he claimed.

They were not involved in the incident, he claimed.

Botanical Garden

FROM PAGE 1

The construction firm will use the garden for a month for only Tk 7,500 a day. It will deposit Tk 10 lakh as security for any damage that its work may cause to the greenery.

Botanists say money can never compensate for the damage that a dredge pipe could possibly do to the country's largest public garden.

In efforts to discourage pipe installation, the forest department had proposed the ministry ask for Tk 50 lakh as security deposit and Tk 10,000 a day as rent, add the officials.

In a letter to the ministry, it said setting up a pipe along a straight line will need a number of trees to be felled and roots of many others cut. A part of the nursery might also be destroyed.

Besides, movement of workers and spills of slurry during the work might damage rare plants.

The letter also said the boundary wall will have to be breached at least at three points.

State Minister Hasan Mahmud however brushes aside the concerns.

"If they [the firm] cause any damage, they will have to compensate for that. Besides, they will lose the permission," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The company has been given the permission in public interests, argued the state minister adding that a good number of people can live there once the land is developed and houses are built.

When his attention was drawn to his predecessor's decision, Hasan said, "I see nothing wrong in allowing a dredge pipe through the garden since the company doesn't have any alternative."

The forest officials who visited the area had already informed the authorities in writing that the developer could easily transport sand by roads.

Al Wasi Builders first applied for permission to set up a pipeline.

On its application, former state minister Mostafiz and senior forest officials visited rose garden, nursery, cactus house, orchard and other parts of the botanical garden

Good day

FROM PAGE 16

Pakistan also claimed their first gold in judo.

Bangladesh however fared badly in judo with their gold prospects Habibur Rahman and Sushil Chandro Mohonto eventually claiming bronze.

In the team event, Bangladesh women and men's kabaddi teams got off to winning starts. On the football field, Bangladesh women team blanked Sri Lanka 2-0.

PM hopes

FROM PAGE 1

that as per the Constitution, if any member of parliament continues to remain absent for 90 working days, his/her seat will fall vacant. The number of working days is very close to 90 days for opposition members of the House.

She said the opposition members will return to Parliament to keep their membership. "Not only that, the opposition will return to Parliament to make the House more vibrant and effective," she hoped.

Hasina said it is only the people of the country who will decide which party will run the government. "Only the people will decide through their voting power, none else."

Describing her government's various steps to make democracy more effective in the country, she said that her government formed all parliamentary standing committees in the first session of the current Parliament.

She also said that of the total 47 committees, chairmanship of seven committees have been given to the opposition parties.

The prime minister said it is not possible to develop the country without giving a strong footing to democracy and democratic process. "My party also thinks this way."

She said the 9th general election of the country, which was held on December 29 in 2008, was free, fair and acceptable to the world community.

"People of the country exercised their franchise without any fear and coercion and the election was held in a festive manner," Hasina told

they were not involved in the incident, he claimed.

BDR mutiny

FROM PAGE 16

a time prayer before the court as the complainant -- officer-in-charge of Kurigram Sadar thana -- was absent yesterday, the date for starting the deposition of witnesses.

The complainant filed the case with Kurigram Chief Judicial Magistrate Court on May 15 last year against 34 BDR personnel for their alleged participation in the mutiny during the carnage at the headquarters at Palkhona on February 25-26. The court later framed the charge against all of them.

The 34 BDR members, who were arrested last year, were brought from jail before the court and their relatives were allowed to meet them.

They were sent back to jail after the court proceedings.

A group of lawyers stood on behalf of the BDR members while Public Prosecutor advocate SM Abraham Lincoln conducted the case on behalf of government.

The trial of the 34 BDR members on charge of mutiny would be held at a BDR special court as per schedule that has not been fixed yet.

Federer

FROM PAGE 16

fifth seed in straight sets, 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (13/11) in two hours 41 minutes on Rod Laver Arena.

The world number one clinched victory in a gripping tie-breaker, 13 points to 11, when Murray frittered five set points and the Swiss claimed it on his third match point.

The victory came when Murray netted a forehand to climax a draining match.

It was the Scot's second Grand Slam loss to Federer following his defeat to him in the 2008 US Open final and continued Britain's frustrating chase for a first male Grand Slam winner since Fred Perry last won 74 years ago.

It is now 279 Grand Slam tournaments since Perry beat American Donald Budge in the 1936 US Open final.

Federer has now won 16 Grand Slams in the span of 27 majors and has lost only six finals in that time.

He became the fifth man in history to win four Australian Open titles with the last man to do so American Andre Agassi in 2003.

Govt mulls

FROM PAGE 16

He said this to reporters after a meeting on the progress of a annual development programme of the ministry at his secretariat office. State Minister for Law Qamrul Islam was present there.

"If all the convicted killers of Bangabandhu are not executed, the implementation of the Supreme Court verdict will remain incomplete," Shafique Ahmed said.

Asked about the reports that Canada would not send Nur Chowdhury, one of the six absconding killers of Bangabandhu, back to Bangladesh, he said that the report is not correct.

The government is discussing with Canada and other countries, he said.

He said the government would take all steps to bring the fugitive killers back.

Jahanara

FROM PAGE 16

on November 18 last year seeking anticipatory bail. But the court without granting bail directed her to surrender before the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court within eight weeks.

Jahanara, also secretary general of Liberal Democratic Party, accordingly surrendered before the court on January 21 and sought bail.

The court without any order on the bail petition directed her to go to the HC for extension of her bail period as it expired on January 18.

But Jahanara's lawyers told the court yesterday that they could not move any petition with the HC for the bail extension.

Therefore, the lawyers prayed to the court for granting bail on the basis of the case's merit.

However, the prosecution opposed the bail petition saying that the petitioner had violated the court order asking her to get the bail period extended.

The prosecution also asked the court to send her to jail, as she did not appear before the court within the time limit set by the HC earlier.

On February 12, 2008, Assistant Director of ACC Mahubul Alam filed the case with Ramna Police Station against Jahanara for amassing wealth illegally and concealing wealth information in the statement submitted to the commission.

In the case statement, the complainant mentioned that Jahanara amassed wealth worth Tk 2.34 crore beyond her known sources of income and concealed information of wealth worth over Tk 2 crore.

Amar Ekushey

FROM PAGE 16

government and non-government organisations and media houses will participate in the fair.

"We hope the fair premises will not be clumsy like in the past. We have concentrated on proper distribution of stalls," said Prof Shamsuzzaman Khan.

Speaking at a press conference at the academy, he said they had taken care of space as well as beauty of the book fair venue.

"As the fair is linked to a memorable incident, we have tried to add new dimension to it," he added.

The fair will remain open from 3:00pm to 9:00pm daily without holidays till February 28. On holidays the gate will open at 11:00am and close at 9:00pm.

On February 21, the International Mother Language Day, the fair will open at 8:00am and continue till 10:00pm.

Book lovers will get 25 percent concession on the books published by the publishers and organisations while Bangla Academy will provide 30 percent concession on its own books.

Members of police, Rab and intelligence agencies will be active to ensure tight security on the fair premises.

"Two control rooms and 15 close circuit cameras have been set up to ensure security," Prof Shamsuzzaman said.

Different spots of the pre-

BNP to complete

FROM PAGE 1

senior joint secretary general, told The Daily Star last night after a joint party meeting at Naya Paltan office.

Joint secretaries general, organising secretaries and assistant organising secretaries were present.

They sat for the first time after formation of the party's present committee on January 1 following the fifth national council on December 8.

Mirza Alamgir said they will collect reports from all district committees on the outcome of the party's enrolment programme in August and September last year for preparing a database on party members.

He said they had asked organising secretaries to work on the district units that held councils but still reel from internal disputes.

"Six organising secretaries will submit reports on the state of district units within a week," he added.

Alamgir said the central leaders will start touring after this week.

BNP BRIEFING

Leaders of the main opposition in parliament alleged that the intelligence agency is forcing journalists to publish libellous allegations against them as part of the campaign.

They made the allegations at a media briefing in BNP's Nayapaltan headquarters in the capital, but did not disclose the names of the intelligence agency or the journalists. They however urged the government to stop the practice