

\$157m WB credit to improve rural livelihoods

UNB, Dhaka

The government yesterday signed two credit agreements worth 157 million US dollar for the 'Empowerment and livelihood improvement project, known as the Notun Jibon Project, and additional financing for the on-going Municipal Services Project.

The agreements were signed at the Economic Relations Division (ERD).

ERD Secretary M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan and World Bank Country Director Ellen Goldstein signed on behalf of their respective side, said a World Bank press release.

The credit from the International Development Association (IDA), the World Bank's concessional lending arm, has 40 years to maturity, including a 10-year grace period; and carries a service charge of 0.75 percent.

According to the press release, 115 million US dollar provided for the Notun Jibon supports the second phase of a 12-15 year community-driven development programme focused on the poorest districts.

It will improve the quality of life and the livelihoods of poor households in rural areas while helping to build resilience to climate change and natural disasters, it said.

The second phase will scale up results from the first phase, which included completion of 1,700 community infrastructure projects as local roads, culverts, bridges; creation of 22,000 women's savings groups; skill enhancement and job creation for 75,000 vulnerable youths; and skills training and income generation for 30,000 of the poorest and most vulnerable individuals.

"Our new country strategy to support Bangladesh underscores the importance of scaling up in areas where we see development results" said Ellen Goldstein at the ceremony.

The first phase benefited an estimated 3 million people in seven of Bangladesh's poorest districts. The second phase will deepen activity in these districts and expand to eight others, reaching an additional 3 million people, the release said.

The 42 million dollar additional funding for the on-going Municipal Services Project is one response to the World Bank's strategic priority of improving planning and management of the urbanisation process in Bangladesh.

Started in 1999, the project has financed basic infrastructure, such as water supply, roads and street lighting in about 130 municipalities, and repaired and rehabilitated flood-damaged infrastructure in more than 200 towns following the devastating floods of 1998, 2004 and 2007.

The additional financing will support infrastructure improvements in around 170 towns and improve financial and management capacity in municipalities.



Anwarul Kabir Raju, left, of Bangladesh and Pijush Dhar, right, of India exchange flags of their respective countries at the end of the Bangladesh-India Friendly Bicycle Procession at the base of Aparajeyo Bangla in Dhaka University yesterday while Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni, Vice-Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique and lawmaker Fazle Hossain Badsha looks on.

Indo-Bangla bicycle procession ends

DU CORRESPONDENT

With a vow to strengthening friendly relationships between the two neighbouring countries, the Bangladesh-India Friendly Bicycle Procession ended at Dhaka University yesterday.

A total of 35 bicyclists started their journey on August 16 from Kolkata marking the 150th birth anniversary of poet Rabindranath Tagore and 85th birth anniversary of Sukanta Bhattacharya.

Kishor Bahinee, a platform formed by poet Sukanta in Kolkata and another organisation Sukanta Sangsad in Bangladesh arranged the event.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni addressed the concluding ceremony at the base of Aparajeyo Bangla on the campus as the chief guest. DU Vice-Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, local lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon, teachers and students of Dhaka University joined the programme.

After the programme, a sapling of Debdaru was planted in front of the Arts Building on the campus. The bicyclists visited Madhur national, graveyard of national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam and Central Shaheed Minar premises.



Teachers who have completed a training course, organised by Lions Clubs International District 315A-1, Bangladesh at Sheikh Hasina Jubo Prashikkan Kendra in Savar, and trainers pose for a photograph after a certificate giving ceremony there. District Governor Lion AKM Rezawal Haque MJF distributed certificates among the participants. Trainer Nidhi Nagrat from India, PID Lion Sheikh Kabir Hossain MJF, council chairperson and IPDG Lion Khandakar Abu Asfaq PMJF and special chief ID endorsee Lion Kazi Akram Uddin Ahmed, past council chairperson and Lions coast programme Lion AK Golum Kibriya FCA, MJF, second vice district governor Lion Dr Zaglul A Mazumder, cabinet secretary EM Mahmudul Hayder and other senior leaders also attended the function.

Govt firm to ensure food security for all

Matia tells Chinese team

BSS, Dhaka

Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury yesterday said the main aim of the present government is to ensure food security for all.

"We have to go forward for removing poverty and hunger by using our limited resources," she told a ten-member Chinese delegation led by Fan Xiaojian, Chinese Minister of the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development when the delegation called on Matia at her office in the city.

The minister said the agriculture sector of the country is facing different negative impact of the climate change. Presently the main challenge is to build different stress tolerant agriculture system in the country, she added.

She said Chinese agriculture machinery is very much popular in Bangladesh and urged the delegation to supply these machineries to the country at a fair price, an official release said here.

Agriculture Secretary CQK Mustaq Ahmed was present on the occasion.

\$300m ADB loan for power sector

BSS, Dhaka

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide a 300 million US dollar loan to improve efficient energy uses in power plants and support renewable energy projects.

The top officials of ADB mission assured this at a meeting on Sunday with the senior officials of the Power Development Board (PDB) at the PDB office.

The mission led by Priyantha Wijayathunga, ADB's Senior Energy Specialist for South Asia, also showed interest in supporting the 5 megawatt (MW) Kaptai solar power project, which will be the first power project of this kind with grid connectivity in the country.

"We are generating power with some plants whose running at 21 percent to 27 percent efficiency level, which increased our production cost as well as burning huge quantity of precious natural gas", PDB Chairman ASM Alamgir Kabir said.

The power plants at Ashuganj, Raozan, Shikalbaha, Ghorasal, Siddhirganj, Khulna and Barapukuria are the most inefficient plants which are producing huge heat and its efficiency level is between 21 percent and 32 percent, says a PDB source.

"These power plants are generating 1655 MW of power although its installed capacity is 2005 MW. The ADB mission told the meeting that they are in favour of replacing the old power plants that consume huge quantity of gas, but produce small quantity of power.

"Siddhirganj and Ashuganj power plants are on the top of the list. They want to convert the Siddhirganj into combined cycle and replace the old steam turbine in gas turbine", a PDB top official said.

Through this investment, power sector could get 450 MW from these plants burning the same quantity of gas.

Bangabandhu's contribution lauded

METRO DESK

Founder and architect of independent Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's contribution to Bangalee nation's history is unparalleled, unequivocal and unsurpassed, said M A Sabur, president of BCS Trade Association.

Sabur, also chief controller of Imports and Exports (CCIE), was addressing a discussion to observe the National Mourning Day at the CCIE office recently.

Mentioning Bangabandhu as the greatest Bangalee of all times, he said Bangabandhu first succeeded in convincing that an independent Bangladesh was necessary for protecting Bangla language and culture.

"In the thousand-year history of Bangalee nation, Bangabandhu is the only leader who has, in terms of blood, race, language, culture and faith, been a full-blooded Bangalee," he observed.

Special prayer was offered seeking divine blessing for the departed souls of Bangabandhu and his family members, who were brutally killed in the fateful night of August 15, 1975.

M Shamsul Alam, Mahmudul Hassan Khan, Nandan Kumar Banik, Nasrat Jahan, Sikrity Rahman, Rabiul Haque, Mofiz Patwary and Sharifun Nahar also spoke on the occasion.



M A Sabur, president of BCS Trade Association and Chief Controller of Imports and Exports (CCIE), speaks at a discussion commemorating National Mourning Day at CCIE recently.



Rashed Khan Menon speaks at a discussion at TSC of Dhaka University yesterday on the occasion of the 'Black Day'.

DMP to get 5 vehicles from Germany today

METRO DESK

The German Federal Home Ministry has donated five vehicles for police to support police officers' mobility, said a press release yesterday.

The German Ambassador Holger Michael will hand over keys of the vehicles to DMP at a function at the German Embassy in Dhaka today.

The training will be given in this regard in collaboration with the home ministry in December this year.

The German government hopes that this contribution will assist Bangladesh police in carrying out its responsible duties.

Mugger held after gunfight with Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion arrested a mugger and seized a revolver and two bullets from his possession after a gunfight with his gang at Razarbagh in the capital early yesterday.

Mamunur Rashid, 23, was injured by a bullet during the gunfight and admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Mamunur, also known as Dipzal Mamun, is from Motijheel in the city. Rab said the gang was preparing for a robbery at Tower Mor of Razarbagh. The criminals opened fire on a Rab-3 patrol team triggering a gunfight when the law enforcers reached the area on information.

Swechchha Sebak Dal committee announced

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiyatabadi Swechchha Sebak Dal yesterday announced its full-fledged committee 11 months after announcing the name of its president, general secretary and organisational secretary.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia announced the name of Habib-un-Nabi Sohel, Mir Sarafat Ali Safu and Shafiq Bari Babu for the posts of the Swechchhasebak Dal, a front body of BNP, on October 11, 2009.

Finally the organisation announced its complete 333-member committee keeping Monir Hossain as senior vice president.

31 leaders of the organisation got post of vice president and 13 were nominated as joint secretary general.

Cocktail hurled at DU

DU CORRESPONDENT

Two youths hurled a cocktail at the gate of the Business Studies Faculty building of Dhaka University yesterday evening.

Security staff of the building said two people on a motorbike hurled the cocktail at the faculty gate that exploded instantly around 9:00pm.

They also said the motorbike riders left the scene immediately after the explosion.

Earlier at 2:00pm, police recovered an intact cocktail in front of the office of the faculty dean. On information, a team of Shahbagh Police Station recovered the cocktail.

DU Proctor KM Saiful Islam Khan told reporters that they requested police officials to beef up security on the campus considering such incidents.

THREAT TO PM Law enforcers asked not to harass Rafiqul, Moudud, Moazzem

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed the law enforcers not to harass or arrest BNP leaders Moudud Ahmed, Rafiqul Islam Mia and Shah Moazzem Hossain in a case filed in Jessore on charge of threatening Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

An HC bench of Justice Mohamed Dastagir Hossain and Justice AKM Zahirul Hoque passed the order following a bail petition jointly filed by the BNP leaders.

The court asked the law enforcers not to harass or arrest them in this case till further hearing of the bail petition.

Moshiur Rahman, a local Awami League leader, filed the case against the BNP leaders with Jessore Sadar Police Station on July 29 on charge of threatening the prime minister from a BNP rally at Muktagang of Dhaka on July 25.

The accused leaders yesterday appeared before the court for bail.

Advocate Khandker Mahub Hossain and Barrister Badruddoza Badal appeared for the petitioners, while Deputy Attorney General Md Salim represented the government.

TANHA MURDER Rajib still denies involvement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Though Rajib, the lover of Halima Yasmin, who killed her three- and-a-half-year-old Jennifer Islam Tanha, has been arrested but did not confess to the killing.

Three persons, including the house owner of Rajib, the alleged killer of Tanha and her mother's lover, identified him in Khilgaon Police Station yesterday where Rajib is under remand.

On August 4, Khilgaon police recovered the decomposed body of Tanha from the sunshade under the window of Rajib's rented house. The baby was killed on July 29.

On the second day of the remand, the Khilgaon Police Station OC Nazimuddin told The Daily Star that till yesterday Rajib denied his involvement in the killing. He even claimed that he did not know Tanha's mother Halima Yasmin.

The OC also said Halima is now in jail. He said police yesterday appealed to the court for bringing Halima and Rajib face-to-face.

Five injured in clash over control of a fish market

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least five people were injured in a clash between two groups of people over control of the fish market at Hatirpool Kitchen Market in the city last night.

Officer-in-Charge of Shahbagh Police Station Rezaul Karim said two groups - one led by Alamgir and another by Harun - ransacked the fish containers and looted fish of the rival groups and locked in a clash around 9:00pm.

The injured were admitted to a local hospital.

After the clash, general traders were staging demonstrations till filing of this report at 11:00pm protesting the incident.

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