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Dhaka metro rail to be mostly elevated

First phase to link Sonargaon crossing with Pallabi; project likely to end by 2015

SHARIER KHAN

The first part of a mostly elevated metro rail system in the capital will be built mainly over government land and existing roads, based on a Japanese study, said Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain.

Japan showed interest in financing 80 percent of the project cost as well, amounting to US\$1.7 billion. The remaining 20 percent of the cost will be borne by the government.

The government is expecting Japan to finalise the funding during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to that country in January or February next

year.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) conducted the study on the metro rail system, and determined that it will be doable if the majority part is built over the surface. The communications minister said some parts however will be underground.

"This project will not be a public private partnership like the elevated expressway," Syed Abul Hossain told The Daily Star recently. Rather it will be a government project funded by Japan, he added. If Japan provides untied loan, the government will go for open tender.

The Jica study chalked out three

routes. Japan showed interest in the first part dubbed Mass Rail Transit-6.

This part will be 22-kilometre long, said Dr SM Salehuddin, additional executive director of Dhaka Transport Coordination Board. The route stretches between Uttara Third Phase and Sayedabad via Pallabi, Chandrima Udyan, and Hotel Sonargaon crossing.

The remaining two parts involve circular routes from Gulshan-1, Mirpur, Azimpur, National Press Club, and Gulshan-2.

Dr Salehuddin noted that enterprises from China, Iran, India and Malaysia showed interest in the second and third parts of the project.

The Chinese and Iranians are particularly interested in the Gulshan to Mirpur route.

According to the study, financial negotiations between Japan and Bangladesh could be completed by June next year, after which a detailed engineering study will be carried out till December 2013.

By July 2013, the government will be able to begin construction of the first phase. An ongoing environmental impact assessment will be completed by January next year.

In the first stage of construction, the metro rail will be built between Pallabi

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Unrest feared at 110 RMG industries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An intelligence agency of police suspects possible unrest before Eid over wages in 110 garment factories in the capital as well as in Savar, Narayanganj and Gazipur.

The government had already requested all RMG factory owners to pay their employees within September 7 to avert any untoward incidents sparked by disgruntled employees.

The Special Branch (SB) of Police submitted a list containing names of the factories at a meeting on 'Eid Security' held at Police Headquarters yesterday, sources said. There are around 6,500 garment factories in Bangladesh.

"It is a list of possible

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A mobile court discovers papaya being artificially ripened at North Brook Road in Lalkuthi of Old Dhaka yesterday. The court confiscated the fruit.

PHOTO: STAR

PRICES OF ESSENTIALS
Traders shut shops, protest against drive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Facing strong protest from traders, a mobile court monitoring prices of essentials had to leave Karwan Bazar yesterday after it fined a shop for the second time in a week.

Police and locals said when Executive Magistrate Rahima Khatun of the mobile court fined Siddique Store Tk 1 lakh around 3:00pm, traders of Karwan Bazar Kitchen Market staged demonstrations

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Most schools miss basics

Survey on 512 schools reveals the institutions lack environment for education

WASIM BIN HABIB

A countrywide sample survey targeting 512 schools found shabby buildings, noisy environment and surroundings posing threat to mental health of students to be common features of most of the institutions.

The survey, all done by children, also reveals teachers at majority of schools inflict physical and mental tortures on students despite the government ban on corporal punishment at educational

institutions.

Besides, a significant number of female students fall prey to stalking, which is often a reason behind their quitting school and early marriage.

Assisted by Save the Children Australia, the draft report was prepared by Child Parliament, a national-level children organisation.

The survey was conducted among 1,024 students of 512 government and private primary and secondary schools and madrasas in 64 districts this year.

"The survey shows a dismal picture of education," said Sultan Mahmud, country director of Save the Children Australia in Bangladesh. "It reminds that ensuring school governance is not enough. Child-friendly educational environment is also very important for the proper growth of kids."

He said, the children, who conducted the survey, will finalise the report accommodating suggestions from educationists and civil society members and place it

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MUTINY TRIAL AT PILKHANA

Video clips, photos draw their denial

SHARIFUL ISLAM

A BDR jawan stomped in combat gear during the February 25-26 mutiny at the Pilkhana BDR headquarters. The man, wearing a blue headband, kept his fingers close to the trigger of his rifle.

The scene was captured in a video footage and photographs that were screened before the BDR special court-5 at the Darbar Hall of the BDR headquarters yesterday.

The person in the footage and photographs had been identified as Sepoy Al Mamun Jewel,

who outright rejected the identification.

"The person in the photograph and the video is not me," Mamun claimed before the three-member court headed by BDR Director General Maj Gen Md Rafiqul Islam.

Sepoy Fakir Ali Mir, another accused in the BDR mutiny case, also claimed that the person in a photograph taken during the mutiny was not him.

The BDR director general asked him whether he has a twin brother in the BDR as the person in the photograph looked like Fakir. He said "no".

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PM leaves all shell-shocked

Struggles to hold back emotion as she narrates Aug 15 massacre

BSS, Dhaka

Tears rolled down her cheeks and emotion gripped the audience as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina narrated the massacre at Dhanmondi-32 and unkind behaviour of a government after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on August 15, 1975.

"When I came back in 1981 from exile, the then government of president Ziaur Rahman did not allow me to enter our Dhanmondi-32 residence where my father along with most of my family members were brutally killed," she said.

Speaking at a prize giving ceremony at Osmani Memorial Auditorium yesterday morning, she said even General Zia did not allow her to organise a milad mahfil seeking eternal peace of the martyrs of August 15 inside the residence.

"It was Zia who forced us to hold milad on the road for my

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MPs should pay tax

Says lawmaker Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lawmakers should pay income tax as they take their honorarium from taxpayers' money, said Obaidul Quader, Awami League lawmaker and president member, yesterday.

"If people can pay taxes then why shouldn't the lawmakers pay income tax," Quader said at a discussion at Dhaka Reporters' Unity on "The execution of the verdict in Bangabandhu murder case, trial of August 21 grenade attack and war crimes trial: obstacles and remedy".

Lawmakers are exempted from tax on remuneration and

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NIKUNJA STALKING

Victims live on nerves

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Apart from fear for lives, the family of Sakira Nasreen Mitu and Sanjida Nasrin Simu, the victims of stalking, is now facing financial crisis as their mother cannot run her music school at their Nikunja residence.

Sahanaz Begum, their mother, used to teach music to local children to support her family but students have stopped coming fearing that Ekabbar, the local stalker, and his gang might attack them.

"Fear for life has cut us off from the rest of the world as neither can we go out nor anybody dares to come to our house. Under this circumstance, we are facing acute financial crisis as none of my students is coming to my house for lesson", Sahanaz told The Daily Star.

Her husband works as a construction worker in Dubai and the money he sends is spent on food and the education of her two daughters. With her earnings, Sahanaz used to pay the house rent and maintain other expenses.

But she cannot even go outside her house to teach her students.

"Who will resist Ekabbar and his gang if they attack for revenge?" she asked this correspondent in a feeble voice, adding that the accused stalkers are still threatening them over the telephone.

Home Minister Shahara Khatun pledged to ensure their security during her visit to their house following the incident but

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