

PADMA BRIDGE

\$615m ADB fund to get nod today

UNB, Dhaka

The Board of Asian Development Bank (ADB) will meet at Manila in the Philippines today for final approval of US \$ 615 million assistance for construction of the Padma Bridge.

"There is no obstacle so far in approving and releasing the fund as the ADB is very much keen to finance the project," an official of ADB said here.

The Padma Bridge is estimated to cost US \$ 2.4 billion. Although ADB has pledged US \$ 615 million for the project it is likely to increase the amount in future.

After approval from the board, ADB would be the first donor agency or country to release fund for the Padma Bridge. The bank has pledged US \$ 615 million for the bridge and for Padma rail link US \$ 130 million to be given in 2013.

Work on the US \$ 2.4 billion Padma multi-purpose bridge is to begin next month with the target of completing the project by 2013.

The bridge, 6.15km in length, will connect 19 districts of the south-western part of the country with the eastern part, including the capital, and it will be linked with the Asian Highway.

Development partners have agreed to co-finance about US \$ 2.2 billion of which the WB will provide US \$ 1.2 billion, Asian Development Bank US \$ 615 million, Islamic Development Bank US \$ 130 million, JICA US \$ 300 million and Abudhabi Fund US \$ 31.4 million.

Meanwhile, World Bank President Robert Zoellick on Tuesday assured Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who was in Saint Petersburg in Russia, that funds pledged by the global lender for constructing the Padma Bridge in Bangladesh would be released on time.

The assurance came when the World Bank chief met her on the sideline of the Tiger Summit in St Petersburg.



The sorry state of this road in front of the Community Police Office at Tejgaon Industrial Area in the city for the past six months is hampering free movement of both pedestrians and vehicles. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

'Save tigers from extinction' Major reshuffle in judiciary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"Do not disturb us, we want safe zone to survive," read a placard with a cardboard cut-

out of a tiger at a token tigers' rally to press home the demand of saving the biggest species of the cat family from extinction.

Some tiger lovers formed a human chain

at the rally holding some placards with cardboard cut-out of tigers.

Green Belt Trust organised the unique rally in front of the National Press Club in the

city yesterday.

Two schoolgirls who were passing by the press club shouted and laughed seeing the cardboard cut-out of tigers.

Hearing the shouting, one participant of the human chain said, "If we do not take necessary steps right now to save the tigers, only after a few years our next generation would just learn about tigers just seeing placards like this that we are holding now."

Some other placards at the human chain said 'make Sundarbans liveable for us', 'save nature, save tigers', 'now 400 what tomorrow.'

According to a study, the number of tigers was 100,000 in 1900 but now the number is only 3,700 and experts think that tigers might be extinct by the next century.

A paper was given to the journalists by the organisers that said the density of Bengal Tigers in the Sundarbans is still the highest in the world with only 440 tigers though the number is decreasing day by day.

The speakers at the human chain said the number of Bengal Tigers should be doubled within the next decades and the habitat of the tigers should be given the highest priority and maintained and conserved properly.

They also suggested increasing the extent of punishment for hunting tigers and other wild animals under the wildlife protection act.

The human chain was addressed, among others, by Dhaka University Professor Anwarul Islam, Nirapod Development Foundation Chairman Ibnul Syed Rana, Member Secretary of Unnayan Dhara Trust Aminur Rasul, Citizen's Rights Movement Secretary General Tusher Rehman and Greenbelt Trust Director Jasim Khatabi.

BSS, Dhaka

The government in consultation with the Supreme Court has reshuffled the district judges and additional district judges, says a circular of the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs in the city yesterday.

Barisal Divisional Special Judge K M Julfiqar Ali has been appointed as judge of Noakhali Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal, Chuadanga District and Session Judge M Ashraf Hossain as Noakhali district and sessions judge, Bogra Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal Judge Khandakar Golam Mostofa as Chuadanga district and session judge, Netrakona District and Session Judge M Quader Newaz as special judge of Dhaka special judge court-2, Barisal Public Safety Disruption Crimes Prevention Tribunal Judge Mirza M Aiub Ali as Netrakona district and sessions judge, Dhaka Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal No-4 Judge AKM Shamsul Islam as Chittagong district and sessions judge and Dhaka 1st Labour Court Chairman (district judge) M Mofizul Islam as Bogra district and session judge.

Besides, Chittagong 2nd Labour Court Chairman (district judge) M Shahidullah has been appointed Dhaka 1st labour court chairman (district judge) and Bogra District and Sessions Judge M Tariq Haidar as Chittagong 2nd labour court chairman (district judge) under labour and employment ministry on deputation.

Dhaka Additional District Judge M Mizanur Rahman and Chapainawabganj Additional District Judge Arup Kumar Goshwami have been appointed as deputy secretary (additional district judge) in law and justice division on deputation.

NU Nov 3 exam postponed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National University (NU) has postponed its honours first year examination of 2009 scheduled to be held on November 30 due to unavoidable reasons, says a press release.

The examination will be held on December 8 at 9:00am. The NU authorities also announced new schedule of the cancelled examination of Fundamental of Finance of the honours first year in 2009. The exam will be held on December 19 at 9:00am.



PHOTO: STAR

Green Belt Trust forms a human chain in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday demanding protection of Royal Bengal Tigers.

IMPORT OF RICE

Bangladesh for long-term deal with Vietnam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh wants to sign a long-term agreement with Vietnam on rice import, said food and disaster management minister yesterday in a meeting with the Vietnam ambassador to Dhaka.

Minister Abdur Razzaque told this when Vietnamese Ambassador Nguyen Van called on him at his office in the secretariat, said a press release from the ministry.

In response, Nguyen said a government delegation from Vietnam will come soon to Bangladesh to discuss the issue.

He also invited the food minister to visit Vietnam to finalise the agreement.

Razzaque said Bangladeshis consume

parboiled rice so it would be better if Vietnam considers exporting such type of rice.

Nguyen said Vietnam usually exports non-parboiled rice but the country is setting up a mill to prepare parboiled rice.

"With a long-term agreement, cooperative relations between the two countries would be stronger," he said.

In response to a request for supply of one lakh tonne of rice, the ambassador said he will convey the message to his government.

The minister thanked him for the one-lakh tonne of rice supplied by Vietnam earlier.

Bangladesh wants to import rice during this Aman season in efforts to increase the total supply of food grain and stabilise the domestic price of rice.

Red Cross to set up delegation

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) will now have full-fledged presence in Bangladesh through establishment of its own delegation in Dhaka.

To this effect, an agreement between the Bangladesh government and the ICRC has been signed at the foreign affairs ministry.

Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes has signed the agreement on behalf of the government while the ICRC side was represented by Christoph Vogt, head of the ICRC delegation in Dhaka, said a press release.

Since the days of the War of Liberation, ICRC has been providing humanitarian protection and support to disaster-affected people in Bangladesh and alleviating human sufferings, often in close cooperation with the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society. For the last few years, ICRC has been conducting its humanitarian tasks in Bangladesh through a liaison office in Dhaka under the control and supervision of the South Asian Regional Delegation in New Delhi.

After signing the "Headquarters Agreement," the ICRC can now carry out its humanitarian activities in Bangladesh with greater efficiency and speed as well as widen its areas of operation.

Girl murdered in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An unidentified young girl was brutally killed and her body was buried under a construction site of a real estate company in the capital's Gulshan yesterday.

Gulshan police arrested two security guards Rafiqul Islam and Abdul Kaiyum of a private company Basumoti Security Service hired by the real estate company at Gulshan-2.

The body of the 22-year-old girl was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

Police and morgue sources said several injury marks were found on her head.

According to police, criminals first killed the girl by hitting her with iron rods in the head and later the body was dumped early hours yesterday.

Sub-inspector Ashraf Islam said detained security guards Rafiqul and Kaiyum confessed to the killing of the girl during the preliminary interrogation.

"The guards dumped the body to hide their crime but failed", said Ashraf Islam.

€10.4m EU fund for census

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The European Union will finance more than one third of the costs of the Bangladesh Population and Housing Census 2011.

To this effect, an agreement was signed between the European Union and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) yesterday to fund a project titled "Support to the 2011 Bangladesh Population and Housing Census."

The UNFPA and the Bangladesh government will implement the project at a cost of €28.60 million over a period of 48 months. The European Union will contribute €10.4 million while the UNFPA €0.147 million.

The remaining €18.05 million will be contributed by the Bangladesh government in the form of cash, said a EU press release.

Arthur Erken, UNFPA resident representative to Bangladesh, and Milko Van Gool, head of cooperation of the delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh, signed the agreement on behalf of their respective sides at the European Union office in Dhaka.

The project's objective is to help Bangladesh build the capacity to produce a continuous series of reliable and timely demographic, social and economic benchmark data at national and sub-national levels, through population census and surveys.

It is expected that the processing, analysis and evaluation of population data will play an important role in formulating population and development policies and programmes in Bangladesh.

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