

# Minister raps directors for failure in rail projects' implementation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Due to inefficiency and negligence of officials, almost three dozen projects of Bangladesh Railway -- many are crucial to ensure safety and faster communications -- are lagging far behind their original schedule.

While reviewing different railway projects at the Railway Bhaban in the capital yesterday, Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain came down heavily on the project directors and other officials for their failure to implement the projects.

The minister said funds of various donor agencies cannot be used due to such delay, which will result in a poor performance of the railway this year.

Several projects initiated five to six years ago could not even see their tenders floating, as the project heads failed to prepare the necessary documents.

The projects include: upgrading rail tracks of Tongi-Bhairab and Laksham-Chinki, developing Pahartoli workshops, purchasing 11 metre gauge locomotives, remodeling Chittagong railway station and rehabilitation of Fauzdarhat-CGPW-SRV Chittagong section and Lalmonirhat-Burimari section, and Dhaka-Narayanganj rail line.

The projects to strengthen Bangabandhu Multipurpose Bridge, upgrade signalling in 14 train stations between Ishwardi and Darsana, restoration of repair yards and extension of loops at different stations from Khulna to Parbatipur and construction of metre gauge track from Bogra to Jamtoil are also moving at a snail's pace.

The agencies are very unhappy with the slow progress of the projects, ministry sources said, adding that inefficiency and negligence of the officials concerned are to blame for this. They

said sometimes the lending agencies are responsible for the delay.

The Tongi-Bhairab project was taken in 2006 with target to complete by June this year. The ADB assured \$130 million for the project. The project officials failed to send the technical evaluation report for ADB's concurrence in time, eventually halting the project.

The project of doubling the Laksham-Chinki line is in a poorer condition. The Tk 501 crore project was initiated in 2007 and is still in the process of tender evaluation. The project director and other concerned failed to complete evaluation of four firms even in four months.

The Communications Minister ridiculed for the delay in evaluation, but none could come up with an explanation.

The project director then assured the minister to finish it by next Tuesday.

# BDR MUTINY 3 prosecution witnesses give depositions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three prosecution witnesses of a special court, trying the mutineers of 24 Rifle Battalion, yesterday gave depositions against 67 suspected accused and were cross-examined by them later.

They gave the depositions before the Special Court-7 set up at Darbar Hall in Palkhona, headquarters of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB).

The court, headed by BGB Director General Maj Gen Rafiqul Islam, was adjourned till 9:00am of today.



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