

Japan disaster not to deter Padma Bridge construction  
Says PM adviser

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister's International Affairs Adviser Gowhar Rizvi said construction of Padma Multi-Purpose Bridge despite the catastrophes it is undergoing," he said.

"Japan will stand by Bangladesh for the construction of Padma Multi-Purpose Bridge despite the catastrophes it is undergoing," he said.

Rizvi told this to journalists after visiting resettlement sites of the project at Madhobchar union of Madaripur district on Friday.

Bridge Division Secretary Mosharruf Hossain Bhuiyan and Additional Deputy Commissioner (revenue) Shariful Islam accompanied him during the visit.

Rizvi said approach roads of Padma Bridge will begin to be built in May-June, and construction works of the bridge will start in August-September this year.

An agreement will be signed to this end in July, he said, adding that Tk 2,100 crore will be spent for construction of the bridge.

Padma Bridge project director Rafiqul Islam said Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) will provide Bangladesh US\$ 400 million for the mega project.

Necessary formalities have been completed in this regard and an agreement will be inked with concerned authority on March 28, he added.



Stranded Bangladeshi workers at Choucha camp in Tunisia-Libya border hold a protest rally demanding their passports from the local authorities and immediate repatriation.

PHOTO: MORSHED ALI KHAN

Population census ends

Many claim to be left out

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The fifth population census of the country ended yesterday with complaints of leaving out a lot of people from the enumeration process.

It will take at least one month to figure out the population and households of the country as the authorities would require the time to analyse the census data, said Ashim Kumar Dey, project director of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

After being excluded from the fifth Population and Housing Census 2011, many residents in the capital and few other districts feared they would face difficulty in future.

"We came to know about the population census from the media, but no enumerator visited our house yet," Nasim Reza, a resident of Sector 14 of Uttara in the capital said yesterday.

Keshob Lal Sarker of Polat village in Madaripur echoed Nasim saying his neighbours are also worried about being left out.

Ashim Kumar said they would know whether all people have been counted, once a post-enumeration check is done.

"We targeted to count the entire population

within the programme's tenure. But we don't know the success rate as we still await information from the enumerators," he added.

Some 3,10,000 census takers and 57,000 supervisors were appointed to conduct the five-day census that began on March 15.

The project director also said despite formal ending of the census, they have directed the census takers to visit their areas again today to ensure nobody is left out.

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies will conduct the post-enumeration check probably by the middle of next month.

The country was divided into 130 census districts where a census coordinator supervised the activities of each of the census districts. Each census district had 20-22 zones.

According to the fourth census conducted in 2001, the number of households was about 2.54 crore and the population was 12.43 crore. The other three censuses were carried out in 1974, 1981 and 1991.

It is now assumed Bangladesh's population has exceeded the 16 crore mark.

Bus kills infant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An 11-month-old boy was killed and his parents suffered injuries when a bus hit their CNG-run three-wheeler at Demra in the capital yesterday.

Rafi, the baby, and his parents were going to Jatrabari to catch a Shariatpur-bound bus, said the law enforcers of Demra Police Station.

The kid and his mother Asma Begum, 26, were rushed to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital where Rafi succumbed to his injury around 3:00pm.

Victim's father Mohammad Milon, 32, a car driver, and his uncle Mokbul Hossain, 33, who was driving the three-wheeler, were admitted in a local clinic.

Police seized the bus of Jamuna Paribahan, but failed to arrest its driver and helper.

Libyan rebels pose no harm to Bangladeshis  
Says evacuee surgeon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Libyan rebels in general are harmless to Bangladeshi expatriates, said a Bangladeshi chest surgeon, who safely managed to flee home from the Libyan political upheaval along with three nurses.

The surgeon Dr Shahed, who worked at Shahat Chest Hospital, 230 kilometers to the east of Benghazi in Libya, was talking to journalists at a press conference at the foreign ministry yesterday.

The surgeon and seven nurses were among the around three hundred Bangladeshi evacuees, mostly labourers, who returned home at midnight on Friday by a Biman flight, crossing the Egyptian border.

Dr Shahed said he along with the three nurses drove 500 kilometres to reach Al Salloum in Egypt-Libya border. The rest of the nurses followed the same route.

"I found around 225 Bangladeshis at a camp," said Shahed to The Daily Star later.

"I decide to flee Libya in the early hours of Thursday, as I came to know that Gaddafi's forces would take over and bombard Tobruk town and reach Al Salloum around 10:30am."

Egyptian nationals, officials of International Organisation of Migration

(IOM), Bangladeshi embassy in Egypt and some Bangladeshi students studying at Al Azhar University entertained the evacuees at Al Salloum camp.

IOM arranged buses for the evacuees, who started from Al Salloum for Alexandria on Thursday evening and arrived on Friday morning. The Biman flight took off from Alexandria at noon.

According to Shahed, who served in Shahat for one year, there are around 70 Bangladeshi nurses working within a 100-kilometre radius of Shahat but they have not faced any attacks by rebels.

"The entire area of Shahat is under control of the Libyan rebels," he said, "But, as far as I know, they have not attacked any hospital, house or other institution."

The rebels are friendly towards Bangladeshis, he said.

The rebels stopped Shahed's vehicle at several check posts but let them go seeing Bangladeshi passports.

The evacuees can safely flee Libya through Benghazi, as it is relatively safer to travel from Benghazi to Al Salloum, he said. It is rather more hazardous to travel from Tripoli to the Tunisian border.

University student stabbed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A private university student was stabbed by miscreants in front of his house in Khilgaon of the city last evening.

Mohammad Ruman, 24, a student Daffodil University, who lives in South Goran, is under treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Ruman claimed some youths including one Robin stabbed him on the back around 6:00pm last night, over his protest against spray of coloured water and teasing of girls on March 11 after Bangladesh won against England in a World Cup match.



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\$21b plan to ensure safe water for all

BSS, Dhaka

A new sector development plan for water supply and sanitation has been proposed for an investment of \$21 billion in next 15 years to ensure everybody's access to safe drinking water and sanitary latrines in the country.

The 2011-2025 plan, developed by the policy support unit of Local Government Division, will soon be placed before the government for approval after the national level consultation of all stakeholders in the city on Monday, official sources told the agency yesterday.

LGRD Minister Syed Ashraf Islam and Chairman of Parliamentary Standing Committee on LGRD Ministry, Rahmat Ali, are expected to join the meeting at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel, on the eve of the World Water Day in the country.

The new plan encompasses provision for available services in hard-to-reach areas including Chittagong Hill Tracts, hygiene promotion, and emerging challenges from climate change. According to the plan, nearly US\$5.4 billion will be required in short term till 2015, the year that coincides with the deadline for millennium development goals.

Over half the money will be channeled from the government fund, one-fourth from utility providers, and the rest from private household and NGOs in short term.

Indian art exhibition starts at DU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A weeklong art exhibition by artists of the Indian state of Tripura began at the Fine Arts faculty of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday.

DU Vice-Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique inaugurated the exhibition organised by Kirat, an organisation of Indian north-eastern region artists, held at Zainul Gallery-2.

Paintings and sculptures of 14 artists will be displayed here till March 25. The gallery will remain open from 12:00pm to 8:00pm everyday. Fine Arts faculty Dean Prof Emdadul Haque Md Motlub Ali, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy DG Kamal Lohani and Kirat President Pabitra Kar also spoke.



Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique views a painting at an exhibition by Indian artists at Zainul Gallery of the university's Faculty of Fine Arts yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Hatirjheel-Begunbari

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on October 8, 2007 approved the Tk 1473.58 crore Integrated Development of Hatirjheel Area project, which was scheduled to be completed by June 2010.

In 2008, the project was revised and its estimated cost stood at around Tk 1,481 crore.

Prof Rahman said the project deadline was extended to June 2011 last year and now a proposal to extend the deadline further to June 2012 is awaiting approval from the Ministry of Housing and Public Works.

The 11 kilometres long and 60 feet wide road includes walkways, a service road and an expressway.

The two-lane single track expressway starting from the Tongi Diversion road will connect Gulshan and Pragati Sharani while the dual-carriageway Service Road the local roads, added Prof Rahman.

Six bridges would also be constructed under the project and they are expected to be ready by next February, said Prof Rahman, adding that of them, four bridges will be constructed at four points

from Tongi Diversion Road to Rampura -- two connecting local roads and two linking the expressway.

Two other bridges would be constructed at the link points of Hatirjheel and Gulshan Lake, and Banani and Hatirjheel.

The project also includes revival of the Begunbari canal.

Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha, Local Government Engineering Division, Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa), Bangladesh Army and Buet are jointly working on the project.

Alongside road construction, the other objectives of the project are rainwater retention, flood protection and proper wastewater disposal.

Prof Rahman said the work of diversion sewer, designed to pass the industrial waste to a treatment plant, will be finished before this monsoon. Almost 60 percent of the work has already been done and the rest will be completed by December.

The digging is aimed to free the canal from toxic and solid waste so that it can be

used for rainwater retention, he explained.

Liakat Ali, deputy managing director (operation and maintenance) of Wasa, said the construction of Dasher Kandi Waste Treatment Plant, another component of the project costing around Tk 485 crore, will start shortly.

Citing that Ecneec has already approved the project, he said the waste management plant for Begunbari-Hatirjheel catchments area would take three to four years to complete.

Obituary

BSS, Dhaka

Amin Mia Chowdhury, a retired government officer, died of old age complications early yesterday. He was 79.

He left behind two daughters, one son and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death, said a press release.

Chowdhury joined admin cadre in 1958 and went on retirement in 1989 as a Divisional Commissioner in Dhaka. Later, he was appointed a member of Public Service Commission (PSC).

Sahara for victim, witness protection act

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Sahara Khatun yesterday vowed to extend her ministry's full cooperation in the immediate implementation of the proposed 'Victim and Witness Protection Act'.

The existing laws are insufficient to protect the victims and witnesses, and thus,

enactment of this new law is an urgent need, she said.

The minister told a workshop on the proposed act organised by Bangladesh Jatiya Mohila Ainjibi Samity at the city's Brac Inn Centre yesterday, said a press release.

Samity's Executive Director Salma Ali moderated the function.



Robert O Blake, US assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asia, writes a note of condolence on the death of BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain at the Gulshan office of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: BNP



Member REHAB