

Japan assures \$400m loan for Padma Bridge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Japan will keep the promise to provide a loan of US \$400 million for Padma River Bridge in Bangladesh, said a senior Japanese official yesterday.

"We promised to give a loan for the construction of Padma River Bridge during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Japan last November.

"It might be delayed following the March 11 earthquake and tsunami, but we will keep the promise," said Takanori Uehara, chargé d'affaires of Japan embassy to Bangladesh.

He was speaking at a seminar titled "Total solar solutions: A road to sustainable energy" organised by Japan Solartech (Bangladesh) Limited at Sheraton Hotel in the city.

Japan recently put the loan on hold, as it needs to focus more on reconstructing its battered economy.

The Japanese government was part of an international consortium, led by World Bank, which agreed to lend Bangladesh up to US \$2.9 billion for the six kilometre long (3.8 mile) bridge last year.

Construction of the bridge, which is expected to boost the South Asian country's economy by linking the underdeveloped southwest with the capital and Chittagong port, is due to begin this year and be completed by 2015.



Jatiya Mahila Sangstha forms a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday demanding immediate implementation of Women Development Policy 2011.

PHOTO: STAR

2 commit suicide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A female NGO activist allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself at her house in the city's Kathalbagan yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Mahmuda Akhter, 24, wife of Lutfar Rahman of the area.

SI of Kolabagan Police Station Abdul Halim said they recovered the body around 2:00pm.

Quoting the victim's husband, the SI said she committed suicide out of emotion.

The couple locked into an altercation over family matters and following that her husband went out from home to recharge his cell phone's balance, he said.

After coming back, Lutfar found the door of the wash-room locked from inside. He broke open the door after half an hour, as he received no response from her despite repeated knocks on the door, said the SI.

Lutfar found her wife hanging from iron bar of the shower and later informed the police, he added.

Meanwhile, female teenage house help allegedly committed suicide on Sunday morning by hanging herself at the city's Cantonment.

The deceased was identified as Nasrin Nazma, 16, daughter of Dulal Miah of Fulbari of Mymensingh district.

Police said Nazma worked at Col retd. Abul Kalam Mohammad Zakir's house at DOHS. Around 10:00am she committed suicide hanging with her scruff as the housemates rebuked her.

Implement Women Dev Policy

Demands Karmojibi Nari

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Karmojibi Nari, an organisation of women workers, demanded immediate implementation of National Women Development Policy 2011 to enable women to realise their rights.

At a press briefing at its office at Shegunbagicha in the city yesterday, the organisation leaders said the policy would pave the way for women to enjoy their rights by scrapping social discrimination and patriarchal mindset.

Fundamentalism is the key enemy of women and a "communal" group is trying to portray the policy as anti-Islamic, meaning against the Quran

and Sunnah, said the organisation's President Shirin Akhter.

"Whereas there is nothing in the policy that goes against the Quran and Sunnah," she said, adding that they are practically battling fundamentalists.

Shirin also said the country's women are in such a position that they are not able to enjoy their laboured earnings and hardly get the just share of their father's property, that Muslim law promotes.

Drawing an example of micro-credit, the organisation member Rahela Rabhani said it is women who take micro-credits but many cases

revealed that their husbands were utilising the money, unduly resulting in the debt's burden falling on women.

The policy is a realistic guideline and it is important to formulate laws on its basis for its proper implementation, they said.

The policy categorically highlights issues like education, power, leadership, rights and partnership that would help women move forward, said speakers.

The organisation's Executive Director Rokeya Rafique, General Secretary Sharmin Kabir and Director Mahmuda Imam also spoke.

Local firm to salvage sunken Korean ship

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A local firm has been appointed yesterday to salvage the North Korean ship MV Hyang Ro Bong that sank in the outer anchorage of Chittagong Port on April 6 after colliding with another ship.

Interport Maritime Limited, representative of the ship's owner firm Sinhung Shipping, appointed the local firm 'Prantik Bengal Salvage and Diving' to rescue the ship.

The Chittagong based company Prantik which is the local partner of Netherlands-based Smit Salvage and US based Titan Salvage, already started preparatory works yesterday, said its officials.

Chief executive of Interport Maritime Captain Mohiuddin Abdul Kader and Prantik Managing Director Golum Sarwar signed an agreement yesterday in this regard.

Captain Kader hoped that the sunken ship could be salvaged by the middle of June.

Golum Sarwar, however, said it might take three to four months to complete the salvage.

"We would try to complete the job as soon as possible", he said adding "Everything depends on weather".

BNP vows to block change

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the main opposition BNP yesterday said they would not let the government legitimise its move to amend the country's constitution.

Addressing a demonstration at the city's Muktagong, the leaders said they would forge a tougher movement so that the government is forced to give a midterm election reasoning that it has showed absolute failure in every sector.

"People want electricity, gas and water. Step down if you [government] cannot provide these," they said and demanded the government makes public the sharemarket probe report without bringing any changes to it.

BNP yesterday staged demonstrations across the country in protest of the ongoing shortage of gas and electricity and submitted memorandum to all the deputy commis-

sioners demanding an end to this.

Party's acting Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir presided over the Muktagong demonstration. Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Moudud Ahmed, MK Anwar and Mirza Abbas addressed the demonstration, among other party leaders.

Moudud Ahmed said the government invited BNP representatives for the parliamentary special committee on constitution amendment only to obtain legitimacy, but it would not get any validity from the opposition.

"The court gave direction on nine clauses in the constitution but the government has brought changes to 40, which is unacceptable," he claimed.

Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir alleged that top brass of the government are amassing crores of taka from the power sector and giving power projects to those close to them without any tender.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa hold talks on behalf of their respective countries during a bilateral meeting at her office in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

PHOTO: PID

14 Korean volunteers in city to train local people

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A fourteen-member team of Korea Overseas Volunteers (KOVs) arrived here on Sunday to provide training to local people on architecture, machinery, welding, electricity, computing and Korean language education for two years.

Korean Ambassador to Bangladesh Cho Tai Young and Resident Representative of Koica Bangladesh office Lee Jung Wook welcomed them on the embassy premises yesterday, said a press release.

The KOVs will first undergo two-month local adaptation training in which there are expected to gain knowledge on local language, culture, and customs.

The fourteen KOVs will then be dispatched to respected host organisations for two years such as architecture, machinery, welding, electricity, computing and Korean language education and so forth.

There are over 60 Korean juvenile volunteers currently serving in Bangladesh.

Six killed, 22 injured in road accidents

METRO DESK

Six people were killed and 22 others injured in road accidents in Munsiganj, Mymensingh, Chittagong and Joypurhat on Sunday night and yesterday.

Our correspondent from Munshiganj reports: Locals blocked Dhaka-Mawa Highway for over four hours yesterday following a road accident at Srinagar that killed two people and injured four.

Movement of vehicles resumed after the authorities built a speed breaker on the highway in face of the locals' demand.

A Dhaka-bound bus collided head-on with a CNG-run auto rickshaw at Umpara of the area around 2:00pm, reports our correspondent.

Two passengers of the three-wheeler, Liton, 20, and Bishwajit, 34, died on the spot, said Md Shakhawat Hossain, officer-in-charge of Srinagar Police Station.

The injured Nuru Mia, 40, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital while Hemanta, 35, Rubel, 25, and Deen Islam, 25, were taken to Srinagar Upazila Health Complex.

Our Correspondent from Mymensingh reports: Two people were killed and 12 others injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway at Signboard in Trishal upazila on Sunday night.

The deceased are Nazmul Haque, 22, son of Tafiz Uddin of Bharaduba village in Bhaluka upazila of the district, and Shah Zaman, 25, son of Ramzan Ali of Uttar Shahganj village in Sundarganj upazila of Gaibandha district.

Police said a Dhaka-bound truck collided with another around 11:30pm.

Eight of the injured were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Our Correspondent from Ctg adds: A young man was run over by a covered van in Banurbazar of Bhatiyari yesterday morning.

Samarash Barua, 28, son of Nani Gopal Barua of Satkania Upazila of the district and an employee of Shitakunda Petrol Pump, was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where he died.

Our Correspondent from Dinajpur reports: A truck helper died and six others were injured as their vehicle rammmed a roadside tree in Kalai upazila of Joypurhat district yesterday morning.

The deceased is Abdul Hamid, son of Nabir Uddin of Jangidah village in Shahjadpur upazila of Shirajganj district. The injured were rushed to Joypurhat Modern Hospital and Ziaur Rahman Medical College and Hospital in Bogra.

CPB condemns anarchy by bigots

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) strongly condemned the "disarray" created by communal and fundamentalist quarters in the country over National Women Development Policy 2011.

The party from its presidium meeting at its Paltan office yesterday called upon the women community and patriotic political parties to form mass protests against these quarters, which are opposing the policy, says a press release.

CPB leaders also demanded the government to make changes in the constitution of 1972 with relevance to the present age while preserving its basic spirit and criticised its stance over reinstating the 1972 constitution.

They demanded to bring down price of essentials within people's purchasing capability, introduction of rationing system, controlling import of private cars to reduce traffic congestion in Dhaka and allowing new connections of gas and electricity.

CPB President Manjurul Ahsan Khan presided over the meeting, attended by CPB leaders including Mujahidul Islam Selim, Sahidullah Chowdhury, Haider Akbar Khan Rano, Shah Alam and Shahdat Hossain.



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