

Construction

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According to locals, the disaster happened as the hospital was being constructed on the site which was once a wetland recently filled up with garbage.

Fifty-year-old Mohammad Wahid, who was born here, said "The entire area was a 40-50 feet deep wetland. Various establishments were erected after it was filled up."

Shafiqul Islam, an Ansar member who was on duty at the place Friday night, said a tin-roofed house collapsed with a huge bang around 12:30am yesterday.

Locals said two other finished buildings crumbled and a concrete street, north to the construction site, subsided around 2:30am.

While visiting the area, Rajuk Chairman Mohammad Nurul Huda said the cave-in occurred due to faulty piling work.

Replying to a query, he said, "The construction was approved by Rajuk, but neither the owners nor the engineers followed our instructions."

"All the residents have been evacuated from the affected buildings as well as from those at risk of collapse," said Nurul Huda. "The victims must be compensated and punitive measures will be taken against the responsible persons and authorities."

Locals said the under-construction hospital is owned by a physician, Prof Ali Zaher al-Amin. He could not be reached despite repeated attempts.

Khaleda Yasmin, who claimed to be a director of Impulse Medical College and Hospital, confirmed that Islamic Trade Consortium was constructing the building.

Talking to The Daily Star, ITCL Director Ashim K Goswami claimed his company is not responsible for the disaster as another one was assigned for the piling work. Asked, he claimed not to know its name.

The ITCL was building only the basement, he added.

Ashim, however, said they would find out the cause of the incident and also compensate the victims through the local lawmaker.

Mohammad Dipu, 22, son of the owner of one of the affected five-storey buildings, said, "We built the building with all we had. If it collapses, we will have to stay under the open sky."

There are many establishments to the north of the tilted building.

Dipu's father Abdul Mannan Patwari said, "The construction started six months ago. They dug deep into the ground. We opposed but nobody listened."

M Abdus Salam, fire service and civil defence director (administration and audit), told reporters, "Gas pipelines to several houses were damaged due to the incident. Residents of the area have been requested not to ignite stoves for now."

CASE FILED
Meanwhile, Rajuk officials filed a case against the authorities of the under-construction hospital and its engineers last night while a three-member committee was formed to probe the incident.

Rajuk Chairman Nurul Huda said the case was filed under Real Estate Development and Management Act 2010.

The probe committee headed by engineer Abdul Mannan, member of Rajuk (planning and management), has been asked to submit its report in seven days.

Rab to get

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operation, maintenance and safety of the choppers, added the official.

The purchase committee meeting will also consider a scheme for building 360 flats, each measuring 1336 square feet, for government officials in the capital's Mirpur area, stated sources in housing and public works ministry.

The ministry will also propose to construct three buildings, each having 15 stores, in Dohar upazila of Dhaka for the middle class people. The three units will have 168 flats with a floor area of 1298 square feet each.

ADP implementation

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As per the revised plan, in the last two months of the current fiscal year the government will spend Tk 7,110 crore every month.

As the fiscal year is drawing nearer to an end, the expenditure is getting faster and with it government's bank borrowing is increasing. In the first six months of the current fiscal year the government's bank borrowing was very small. After 10 months the government has borrowed Tk 11,380 crore from the banking system.

In this year's budget, the government set a target to borrow around Tk 15,000 crore but it may exceed this target.

A Bangladesh Bank official said if the government borrows steadily every month as per its target it does not have any negative impact but if it borrows a huge amount in a small period, it destabilises the money market.

A high official of the planning ministry said after presenting the national budget every year the finance minister in the post-budget press conference urges secretaries to start implementing the ADP from the beginning of the financial year.

The ministries are told to make the purchasing plan ahead of the start of the fiscal year. But the situation does not change, planning ministry officials said. Most of the projects of the ADP are ongoing.

According to planning ministry information, in the last fiscal year the total ADP utilisation was Tk 25,917 crore. In the last two months the expenditure was Tk 9,216 crore. In the last month the expenditure was Tk 6,395 crore.

Planning ministry officials said on many occasions the ministries do not actually spend the money rather show it spent. They show expenditures against different departments and divisions of various ministries. As a result, in the last month a high expenditure is shown.

Even on the last working day of the fiscal year, Tk 2,000 crore to Tk 3,000 crore was released from the government account in Bangladesh Bank.

Zaid Bakht said spending 40 percent of the allocations in 2 months would not only waste public money but also have detrimental effect on the quality of the completed projects.

Zaid Bakht was a member of the public expenditure review commission. Drawing from experience, he said there were instances where cheques were issued to show that the money was spent but in fact it was not and no work had been done.

The government takes up challenging ADPs with a large number of projects but the ministries concerned do not have the capability or the efficiency to implement them, which creates these problems.

A planning ministry official said hurried expenditure at the end of the year results in the government's original plan for ADP failing its goal. Even though ministries fail to implement the ADP fully at the end of the year, they make demand for more allocation.

Implementation
Monitoring and Evaluation Department (IMED) in its report prepared in March mentioned several problems in ADP implementation.

The ministries take up more projects than the resources allocated to them under the medium-term budgetary framework. As the number of projects increases, both the tenure and expenditure go up.

In the current fiscal year, the number of total projects was 916, in the revised ADP allocation was cut by more than Tk 3,000 crore but the number of projects increased to 1,185. The planning ministry official said this is a yearly phenomenon.

According to the IMED report, the projects the government takes every year cannot be completed for the lack of necessary resources. In the current fiscal year, 287 projects were scheduled for completion but in the revised budget the number was reduced.

Project implementation is delayed due to various reasons including change in the project design, inefficiency and failure to release funds.

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Dark energy

FROM PAGE 20
energy results.

Two papers by an international team of researchers have been accepted for publication in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society journal.

Both of these techniques confirmed the existence of dark energy and the acceleration in the expansion of the Universe.

The concept of dark energy was first invoked in the late 1990s by studying the brightness of distant supernovas -- exploding stars.

EINSTEIN WAS RIGHT
To explain why the expansion of the Universe was speeding up, astronomers had to either rewrite Albert Einstein's theory of gravity or accept that the cosmos was filled with a novel type of energy.

"The action of dark energy is as if you threw a ball up in the air, and it kept speeding upward into the sky faster and faster," said co-author Chris Blake of the Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne, Australia.

"The results tell us that dark energy is a cosmological constant, as Einstein proposed. If gravity were the culprit, then we wouldn't be seeing these constant effects of dark energy throughout time."

2 robbers

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information stopped a microbus carrying a gang of robbers around 9:00pm when the bandits were going to Bazar area of Musapur union from Chardiara Balua.

They could catch two of the robbers while the others managed to flee. The mob beat the two up leaving them dead on the spot.

One of the deceased was identified as Jashim Uddin while the identity of another could not be known immediately.

Jashim hails from Gochhaghram and is an accused in a number of robbery cases, said Officer-in-Charge Monjurul Haque of Companyganj Police Station.

The bodies were sent to Noakhali General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Bus operators

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long queues for buses. The situation was the same in other places where drives were continuing.

Even the two magistrates of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, who have been conducting the drives, had to give up fining or confiscating more than one bus of each operator considering commuters' suffering.

"Whenever we start our drive, the bus operators seem to know about that and keep their buses from operating on that very route for hours," said Magistrate Md Tofael Islam.

"What can we do if a bus stops operating," he sounded helpless.

If the operators were convinced of the fare prior to the announcement of the government rates, it would have been easier to monitor and passengers would not have suffered so much, said the magistrate.

He said large-scale drives would soon start to make the bus operators charge passengers exact fares. Meanwhile, the traffic police would have to be more active to help deal with the matter.

Another magistrate SM Rezaul Karim, who conducted drive at Kakoli area, said a comprehensive fare chart would be provided to bus operators today. They will be asked to paste the charts inside buses and at all bus stops so that people could know exactly how much they are to pay to reach their destinations.

"We will strengthen vigilance as to whether the bus operators are charging fares according to the chart," he said adding that more police forces are needed to do it.

The magistrate said sometimes police stations do not provide adequate force to conduct the drives in time.

all norms and ethics."

The most surprising thing is that when the director general of Rab said Limon was a victim of circumstances, the defence adviser claimed Limon and his father are associates of notorious criminal Jomaddar, says the press statement.

Moreover, Limon was accused in the charge sheet and the case was transferred to a special tribunal. "We can assume that all these are happening on instructions of someone from the top."

On March 23, 16-year-old college student Limon Hossain of Chhaturia in Jhalakathi got shot in the leg by Rab personnel who later filed two cases accusing him of possessing arms and obstructing law enforcers in their duty. His leg had to be amputated.

The politburo of the Workers' Party is of the opinion that the steps taken against Limon and the defence adviser's statements are intended to hide the truth. The stance of the defence adviser will tarnish the image of the government.

The politburo also demanded removal of all conflicting clauses from the four principles of the original constitution as dictated by the Supreme Court.

Israel defiant

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But speaking in the Oval Office after their meeting, Netanyahu flatly rejected this proposal, saying Israel wanted "a peace that will be genuine".

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Obama said there were obviously "some differences" in the "precise formulations and language" used by Israel and the US, but that this "happens between friends".

He did not bring up the matter of the borders in his joint conference with Netanyahu.

But he said Palestinians faced "tough choices" following the recent reconciliation deal between Fatah, which runs the West Bank, and Hamas, which governs Gaza and still denies Israel's

right to exist.

Obama said true peace could only occur if Israel was allowed to defend itself against threats.

The BBC's Paul Adams in Washington says that while notion of a peace agreement based on 1967 lines is not news, Obama has clearly angered Netanyahu by formally adopting it.

Netanyahu has come under increasing pressure as world figures and organisations, including American's partners in the Middle East Peace Quartet, EU, UN and Russia, lined up to back Obama's position.

Arab League chief, Amr Moussa, also called on President Obama to remain committed to the plan.

But in the absence of a viable peace process, it is unclear what will come of US-Israel talks, says our correspondent.

Mamata keeps

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reforms and power.

Before finalising the portfolios Mamata held a meeting with senior party leaders late into the night at the state secretariat in Kolkata. The portfolios were announced to the media early yesterday.

Congress is yet to name five more of its representatives in the cabinet while Trinamool Congress will pick up another cabinet member. The six will take oath at a later date.

The total strength of the new cabinet is the same as that of the previous Left Front government, though Mamata earlier hinted for a 'small' cabinet.

On that note Mamata said she had to take care of diverse interest groups, castes, and religious communities in order to give a broad representative look to the cabinet.

Economist and former secretary general of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry Amit Mitra got the portfolio of finance.

Mamata's close aide Partha Chatterjee was given the charge of the ministries of commerce

and industries, public enterprises, industrial reconstruction, parliamentary affairs and information technology.

Subrata Bakshi, state president of Trinamool Congress, received charge of PWD and transport portfolio while former bureaucrat Manish Gupta, who defeated Buddhadev Bhattacharjee, the former chief minister, in Jadavpur constituency in South Kolkata, received charge of the development and planning department.

Former Kolkata mayor and Trinamool Congress vice-president Subrata Mukherjee is minister of Public Health Engineering, Shyamal Mandal, the minister of Sundarbans affairs and Madan Mitra is the new sports minister.

Abdul Karim Chowdhury received charge of mass education extension and library services department while Bratya Basu was given the charge of the portfolio of higher education.

Retired judge of Calcutta High Court Noor-e-Alam Chowdhury received charge of animal resources development portfolio

while Javed Ahmed Khan got the disaster management, fire and emergency services and civil defence ministry.

Purnendu Basu, a former Maoist leader, was made the labour minister, Jyotipriya Mallick, a senior party leader, got the food and civil supplies department, Haider Aziz Safwi, a former police officer, received charge of cooperation and inland water transport portfolio.

Malay Ghatak is the new law minister while Rajpal Singh was chosen for tourism ministry.

Banerjee's close aide Firhad Hakim was given charge of the department of municipal affairs and urban development, while Sabitri Mitra got the department of women and child development and social welfare.

Manas Bhuiya, president of West Bengal state Congress party, received charge of irrigation and waterways, micro and small scale enterprises and textiles while Abu Hena received charge of the departments of fisheries, food processing industries and horticulture.

JS goes

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Parliamentary Party will organise a press conference at the Jatiya Sangsad Media Centre tomorrow [today] and formally announce its decision over joining parliament," he said.

BNP senior leader and a standing committee member Moudud Ahmed yesterday at a meeting said they will join the session if the four cases against party Chairperson Khaleda Zia are withdrawn immediately.

BNP acting Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said they will resist if the government tries to amend the constitution alone. He was talking to reporters at Sirajganj on his way to Thakurgaon.

While addressing a human chain in the city, Zainul Abdin Faroque said they will return to parliament only when the government accepts their demand of holding a mid-term election.

In June 2009, the opposition lawmakers started boycotting the House. After remaining absent for 64 consecutive sittings they returned on February 11, 2011. They again boycotted parliament in June 2010 and returned on March 15 this year after missing 74 sittings.

Meanwhile, the Business Advisory Committee (Bac) of parliament headed by Speaker Abdul Hamid will sit in the parliament at 3:00pm, an hour before the budget session, to fix the duration and other activities of the session, said sources in parliament secretariat.

Apart from passing the budget for the next fiscal year, this session is likely to witness a bill proposing some major changes to the constitution.

Police officers admit the new system is unattractive, clunky and a flop among the citizens.

Speaking on anonymously, a top home ministry official blamed lack of promotion and the slow online process, which ironically is more time consuming than the handwritten process.

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