

# Start process to sign

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modalities with India to see how it operates. The modalities, he said, should not be a lifelong commitment. "If we make any mistake we can correct it later," he said.

Speaking at the seminar Debapriya, distinguished fellow of Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said Bangladesh should not rush to sign the transit deal with India.

"Bangladesh is still not prepared for it. Signing an agreement without proper technical evaluation, authentic cost-benefit analysis and mobilisation of public opinion will be suicidal," Debapriya told the seminar organised by Media Initiative for Public Policy (MIPP) and Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB).

Presided over by MIPP President Farid Hossain the seminar on "Regional connectivity and transit" was also addressed by Dr Mohammad Yunus, a senior research fellow at Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), and also a member of the government committee on transit.

Insisting that his organisation was the first to advocate for regional connectivity and transit deal with India, Debapriya said, "It has to be visibly economically viable to become politically sustainable."

He said there are many uncertainties and many questions unanswered as Bangladesh prepares to sign the deal with India.

"We will need land to build the roads. Is it easy to get the

land in Bangladesh? The process of determining the price of land is very complex," he said.

He suggested signing a framework agreement with India before going for a full-scale deal. He said Bangladesh needs to start the bargaining with India from a higher position. "But we are starting from a lower position. This is not good for us," he said.

"To achieve maximum benefit from providing transit and transhipment facilities to India, the government has to boost its bargaining capacity at the discussions table. The government needs to achieve the best of its national interest," he said.

"Without proper evaluation, authentic cost-benefit study and public opinion, it would be unwise and suicidal for the government to finalise guidelines that are related to transit between Bangladesh and India," he said.

Debapriya, also a former ambassador of Bangladesh to the World Trade Organization (WTO), criticised those who seek to drag the world body into the debate on transit.

"Transit is essentially a bilateral issue. I don't know how it can be treated as multilateral," he said.

He also cautioned about hazards of fixing transit fees under the articles of World Trade Organization (WTO) as the approach would be counter-productive.

"The document for transit fees should be bilateral as it is based on the joint communiqué between

Bangladesh and India signed in 2010. So WTO has nothing to do with it unless any conflict arises," said Debapriya.

He advised for comprehensive study before fixing transit fees for using Bangladesh roads and infrastructure by India. "It will not be wise to fix the fees on the basis of other's study instead of doing our own homework on it."

He said all the issues like congestion charges, cost of lands and its impact on food production, environment and biodiversity should also be taken into account while fixing the fees.

Gowher Rizvi agreed to some of the points raised by Debapriya, but said it will not be wise to delay the transit process.

He said "To begin with, we can sign an operational deal with India, and learn from them. If there are flaws in the deal, we can amend that later."

He also stressed the need to look at the economic and trade potentials of transit and transhipment between neighbouring countries.

"This is an investment for the future of the region. Bangladesh will be a hub of development in the region. The transit issue should be seen in the perspective of this long vision," he said.

Yunus, who has worked

extensively on the cost-benefit analysis of transit under a yet-to-be-published ADB report, Bangladesh stands to gain immensely from transit deal with India.

## Banks asked

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issued letters to the banks on Sunday giving a brief introduction about the man, who is allegedly involved in a number of high-profile crimes including money laundering.

According to the letter, the business tycoon uses two other names -- Dr Moosa Bin Shamsher and Prince Moosa Bin Shamsher.

The documents BB asked for include anything relating to him or his interest, specifically his account opening forms, know your customer (KYC) profile forms and records of all his transactions.

The central bank asked for those following a request by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

A top official of the anti-graft body said they spontaneously initiated an enquiry about him after several dailies ran reports that this "mysterious man" has amassed a huge wealth.

"There are various allegations against this man. He is allegedly involved in several high-profile criminal activities. Currently, the commission is conducting an enquiry into the allegations including one of money laundering," said the ACC official asking not to be named.

However, details about the enquiry or allegations being probed could not be known.

If the enquiry finds evidence to substantiate the allegations, the ACC would ask the man to submit his wealth statement. If the statement does not match the ACC findings, the commission will launch an investigation into his wealth.

## BAF aircraft

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due to one of its punctured wheels at about 1:30pm, sources at the airport said.

Flight operations resumed at 2:00pm after the authorities concerned repaired the damaged tyre of the aircraft and cleared the runway.

## 3 die

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But suddenly Taher felt sick and became unconscious inside the tank.

His two nephews -- Jhinu Mia, 20, and Shahin Mia, 17, -- met the same fate when they hurried down to rescue Taher.

According to other media reports, the US authorities on January 8, 2009, initiated a move in a District of Columbia court to recover funds worth \$3 million allegedly obtained by Koko from German company Siemens and kept in a Singapore-based bank.

On December 15 the previous year, in a settlement with the US Department of Justice, Siemens agreed to pay \$1.6 billion in fine to various authorities as penalties for

Rumana, an assistant professor of International Relations Department at Dhaka University, sustained severe injuries as her husband Hasan Sayeed Sumon pushed his fingers into her eyes on June 5.

She is now being treated at LabAid Hospital in the city.

Signatories of the statement include Hameeda Hossain, Khushi Kabir, Saimon, Gitiara Nasreen, Zafarullah Chowdhury, Amena Mohsin, Salma Khan, Rokeya Kabir, Sara Zaker, Sadeka Halim, Rahnuma Ahmed, Habibun Nessa, Shireen Huq, Anu Muhammad, Sonia Amin, Imtiaz Ahmed, Mohuya Leya Falia, Naila Zaman Khan, Salma Ali, Kaberi Gayen, Farida Akhter and Moshrefa Mishu.

They said the allegation of infidelity brought against Rumana by Sumon is an attempt to divert attention from the attack and put the blame on the victim.

"Even though accusations of infidelity to justify violence against women have no place in law, women tolerate violence for fear of such allegations, which allows the perpetrators to continue the violence with impunity," the statement said, adding that a woman's fidelity or character is immaterial to the prosecution of a case of violence.

The attack against Rumana constitutes a grievous crime and the prosecution should take into account not just the physical injuries to her, but also the psychological harm that she, her daughter and parents have suffered.

They said the incident provides all those committed to combat violence against women, be it by strangers or by the loved ones, an opportunity to come together and strengthen the voice against such violence.

These payments totalling 2.8 million Singaporean dollars were deposited in the account number 1093101397 of United Overseas Bank (UOB) for account holder

# Govt to take \$6.45b

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planned projects. The total cost of the projects has been estimated at \$6.45 billion.

Economic Relations

Division (ERD) Secretary M Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan and ADB's Country Director Thevakumar Kandiah signed the deal at a ceremony at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the capital.

The loan will be used for proper feasibility study, design and ensuring implementation of the projects, noted the ERD secretary adding, many projects are either being delayed or could not be implemented due to flawed feasibility study and design.

The road projects include Chittagong-Cox's Bazar-Teknaf road, 374-km Petrapole (India)-Benapole-Jessore-Magura-Daulatdia-Paturia-Dharkar-Akhaura-Agartala (India) 664-km Phulbari (India)-Bangabandha-Hatikumrul-Mongla, 286-km Dawki-Tamabil-Sylhet-Dhaka, 215-km Akhaura-Dharkar-Comilla-Chittagong, 138-km

Burimari-Rangpur, 60-km Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga and 219-km Sonamasjid-Rajshahi-Jamuna Bridge roads.

The 222-km Doulatdia-Magura-Jhenaiah-Jessore-Khulna National Highway, 157-km Hatikumrul-Rangpur National Highway, 48-km Khulna-Mongla road with link to Dhigraj to Mongla Ferry Ghat, 286-km Dhaka (Katchpur)-Bhairab-Jagadishpur-Shaistaaganj-Sylhet-Tamabil, 138-km Rangpur-Teesta-Burimari (Lalmonirhat) and 204-km Sonamasjid-Rajshahi-Hatikumrul roads will be upgraded into four lanes.

Among the sub-regional railway projects are construction of 160-km Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga-Jessore rail link, 53-km Khulna-Mongla Port rail line, 128 km single line metre gauge railway track from Dohazari to Cox's Bazar via Ramu and Ramu to Gundum near Myanmar border, railway bridge with provision of dual gauge double track over Jamuna river and strengthening or

reconstruction of Hardinge Bridge to allow trans-Asian traffic.

Replacement and modernisation of railway signalling system of 20 stations between Iswardi-Parbatipur section, five stations between Rajshahi-Abdulpur section and 15 stations between Darsana-Khulna section in the west zone of Bangladesh Railway will be done under a separate project.

According to the agreement, the amount is a concessionary Asian Development Fund (ADF) loan with a repayment tenure of 32 years including a grace period of eight years. The interest rate is 1 percent during the grace period and 1.5 percent thereafter.

These projects focus on priority transport corridors identified in the Saarc Regional Multimodal Transport Study and also with the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (Bimstec) countries.

## Find solution

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solution through constructive dialogue," German Minister Niebel told the press conference held at the EU Head of the Delegation office yesterday evening.

The German minister referred to his own political career. He said he had been in the opposition for 12 years and two years in the government. Whatever is the number, the opposition can say and show how can they do better than the government, he said.

Replying to a question about the current impasse between the government and the opposition, they said it is up to the politicians to discuss the divergent views and find out a solution through constructive talks.

On another question about extra-judicial killings by Rab, the EU commissioner said the legal system should be followed for justice and an accused should have the chance to defend.

When asked about any impediments they had found in the implementation of EU-funded projects in Bangladesh, the minister and the commissioner were of the opinion that it takes a long time for the administration to make a decision about any development project.

The minister said with better administrative structure, the decision-making and implementation of projects should be fast.

Niebel said Germany would continue its support to the development of Bangladesh and the economic cooperation should bring in development. He stressed the importance of more engagement of the private sector in poverty alleviation.

The EU commissioner and the German minister arrived in Dhaka on June 21 for a four-day joint visit and held meetings with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid and State Minister for Environment and Forest Hasan Mahmud.

They also exchanged views with representatives of the civil society and prior to yesterday's pre-departure press conference, they met Leader of the Opposition and BNP chief Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office in the afternoon.

Khaleda told them about her party's apprehension that there will be no atmosphere for free and acceptable elections following "the government's bid to abolish non-party caretaker government system", UNB reports.

She told them that the caretaker government provision was introduced following an Awami League movement in 1994-95. The caretaker government system is accepted by the people, she said.

During their four-day visit, the joint mission of Niebel and Piebalgs looked at EU and German bilateral development projects in Dhaka, Tongi, Sathkhira and Jessor and expressed satisfaction over the development cooperation.

In reply to a question, Niebel said they want that their tax payers' money are spent effectively and efficiently to have best results.

German Ambassador to Bangladesh Holger Michael and EU Head of the Delegation Ambassador William Hanna were present at the press conference.

French Ambassador Charley Causert and Danish Ambassador Savend Olling were also there.

The EU is the largest market for Bangladeshi products and Germany ranks second largest export destination only behind the USA. Trade with the EU provides Bangladesh with more than half the country's export earnings, reaching 6.5 billion Euro last year. In 2010, total trade between Bangladesh and the EU passed the 8 billion Euro mark. Both export and imports are growing rapidly.

German exports to Bangladesh, mostly machinery and electrical equipment, saw a record increase of almost 80 percent from July 2010 to March 2011 over the corresponding period of the previous year.

# LNG import

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(USA), Hiranandi Pvt Co of India with Hoegh LNG, Norway and BW Gas Norway have been primarily qualified. The BW Gas was selected although it had not provided the tender process.

The selection has not yet been made public.

Bangladesh has twice sent a team to Qatar to make a primary agreement on LNG supply at a concessional rate. Qatar has assured the team of the supply but declined any concession. It has also told Bangladesh that it would sign an agreement when Bangladesh's infrastructure is ready to import LNG.

Petrobangla Chairman Hussain Monsur said the bidding process was delayed due mainly to selection of a consultant by the previous Petrobangla chairman, who was heading the LNG terminal project.

He said the previous chairman selected American company Channel 4 for the job even though it was neither the lowest bidder nor the most competent one. The World Bank, which is financing the project, had reservations about it.

"But we have resolved that matter. We have picked another company, Potent and Partners, which is the lowest bidder. We are now expecting the World Bank's concurrence within a short time," Monsur said.

Potent and Partners has a 20-year lifespan.

Another type of terminal, the first type, preferred by Petrobangla, is FSRU that would cost around \$300 million and take about 12 months to install if there is a unit ready with the winning bidder. But that is an unlikely case as builders do not keep such an expensive unit standby.

"It would practically take two years to have such a unit in the Bay because the contractor would have to build it and then transfer it there," says a source.

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