

BUS RAPID TRANSIT LINE

Project faces hurdles at beginning, say experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The implementation of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Line-3 will be a huge challenge for the government as it is facing numerous hurdles and complications at the preliminary stage, experts said yesterday.

They said finalisation of its proposed alignment stretching from Uttara to Sadarghat via Shahjalal International Airport, Mohakhali, Moghbazar, Babubazar, and Gulistan may take a couple of years more due to the city's unplanned urbanisation and transport system.

Potential conflicts with the under-construction elevated expressway and Kuril, Moghbazar, Mohakhali, and Gulistan flyovers as well as the proposed metro rail are the other hurdles of the BRT line outlined in the Strategic Transport Plan (SPT) in 2008.

The narrowness of the roads is another major barrier for the BRT line,

observed the experts in a presentation of inception reports on the BRT route and Dhaka Bus Network and Regulatory Reform Implementation Study at Sonargaon Hotel in the city.

Three BRT lines have been outlined in the STP, a 20-year plan, which aims at removing the ever-increasing traffic congestion in the capital. Of them, the government chose the BRT line-3 as a priority, which was later extended to Gazipur from Uttara.

About three years ago, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank came forward to help the government conduct feasibility study for the BRT-3.

The ADB has already completed the study and is now preparing detail design of the BRT while the WB just concluded the pre-feasibility study. It will start feasibility study soon.

"The Kuril flyover will be the first bottleneck of the BRT", said Arnest J Mata, leader of the WB team for the BRT line, while presenting his inception

paper. "It will be a big challenge for us to overcome all the hurdles and complications as we move with the BRT line", he added.

International consultant Sergio Tio placed his concept paper on "Dhaka bus network and regulatory reform implementation study and design work project".

He said, "We will face a challenge to reorganise routes for various types of transports in the existing road networks, huge population, and the unplanned transport system in the city".

"Seventeen projects are now being implemented in the city in an unplanned way that will make the task difficult", he said, urging the WB experts to look into the projects before finalising the BRT alignment.

Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain spoke at the function as the chief guest. Buet's Prof Dr Alamgir Mujibul Haque moderated the programme.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) holds a rally in front of its Naya Paltan office in the city yesterday occupying a road. The meeting was organised protesting police attack on Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abdin Farroque during hartal hours on July 6. (Story on Page 1)

ROBI DEBATE

BAWA school, CU become champs

CU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Women Association (BAWA) Girls' High School and Chittagong University have become champions at school and university level contests in Robi Debate Championship 2011.

The concluding ceremony of the debate contest was held in Chittagong Shilpakala Academy auditorium yesterday. Drishti Chittagong, an educational and cultural organisation, arranged the debate which began July 1.

Primary and Mass Education Minister Dr Afsarul Ameen was present as the chief guest in the programme presided over by Drishti president Masud Bakul.

BAWA Girls' High School defeated Chittagong Government High School in the final round, becoming the champion in the 19th inter-school debate. Sabrina Aiyini Sristi of BAWA Girls' School was adjudged the best debater.

At the university level, CU defeated Stamford University while Kawsar Mahmud of the winning team was announced the best debater.

A total of 66 debaters from 21 schools of Chittagong including Chittagong Government High School, Chittagong Government Girls' High School, Ispahani Public School, Collegiate School, BAWA Girls' High School, Bangladesh Elementary School, State Quest School and College, Kapashgola City Corporation Girls' High School, Agrabad Girls' School, Cantonment Public School and College, and Chittagong Ideal School and College contested in the debate championship.

Taking part at the university level were 54 debaters from 18 universities including Dhaka University, Chittagong University, Rajshahi University, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology, Stamford University, Premier University, University of Science and Technology, Chittagong, and International Islamic University of Chittagong.

Chief Human Resource Officer of Robi Motilul Islam Nowhad, noted social worker Touhidul Anwar, founding adviser of Drishti Alhaj Sufi Ahmed Bhuiyan, and Sunshine Grammar School Principal Safia Gazi Rahman, among others, were present at the concluding ceremony.



Winners of Robi Debate Championship pose for photograph with Primary and Mass Education Minister Dr Afsarul Ameen in Chittagong Shilpakala Academy auditorium yesterday. Drishti Chittagong organised the event.

PHOTO: STAR

'Vested quarter trying to confuse people over 15th amendment'

UNB, Sherpur

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury yesterday said a vested quarter is trying to confuse people by claiming that "Islam" as state religion and the phrase "Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim" have been deleted from the constitution.

They are misinterpreting the 15th amendment to the constitution with the

aim of calling hartal and creating chaos.

"They are calling general strike as they want Islam as state religion be abolished and the phrase Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim scrapped from the constitution", she said.

The constitution was amended and ratified by the order of the Supreme Court and the 15th amendment was made retaining Islam as state religion

and the phrase Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim in the preamble, she said, urging people not to listen to their propaganda and remain alert against their politics with religion.

Matia Chowdhury made the call while speaking as the chief guest after distributing cheques under a Test Relief (TR) project in Nakla Upazila Auditorium.

Negative attitude towards neighbours has proved counterproductive

Dipu Moni tells publication ceremony

BSS, Dhaka

Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni yesterday said the present government has taken steps to improve relations with India and other neighbours as negative attitude towards them proved counterproductive in the past.

"There is no alternative to maintaining good relations and friendship with the neighbours... the people had felt severely what cost they had to pay for maintaining strained relations with neighbours in the past 40 years," she said this while she was speaking at a book launching ceremony.

Dipu Moni said the past bitter experiences prompted the current government to take steps to develop ties with the next-door neighbours.

She made the comments a day after her Indian counterpart SM Krishna's three-day visit, considered crucial ahead of Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's visit in September.

She termed her talks with Krishna "very successful and productive" saying "significant progress has been made on all unresolved issues". "I hope the progress that has been made on different issues will have a successful conclusion during Indian premier's visit," she added.

Consensus expected on water sharing of the Teesta river, lands in adverse possession and enclaves during Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's visit

Dipu Moni referred to her "positive discussions" with Krishna on water sharing of the Teesta river, lands in adverse possession and enclaves saying, "We hope that two countries would reach a consensus on these crucial issues during Manmohan's visit."

She said steps have been taken by both the countries to reduce the huge gaps in bilateral trade and develop the land ports along Bangladesh-India borders.

Referring to the transit issue, she said development of regional connectivity was a must for improving the livelihood of the people of the region and "We have been working together to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the one-fifth population of the world who are living in the region."

Later, she unveil the cover of the book titled 'Global flashpoint: South Asia and Middle East' authored by eminent journalist and columnist Zaglul Ahmed Chowdhury.

University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman Prof AK Azad Chowdhury chaired the function.

Former ambassador Barrister Harun ur Rashid, columnist Hasnat Abdul Hye, columnist Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley, journalist Hasan Shahriar, People's University Vice-Chancellor Prof Mustafizur Rahman and publisher of the book M Shamim Wahid were present at the publication ceremony.

CABINET BODY MEETS TOMORROW

13 procurement proposals likely to get nod

UNB, Dhaka

The cabinet purchase committee will consider a total of 13 procurement proposals in a meeting tomorrow.

Import of railway locomotives, setting up of power plants in public and private sector, and import of petroleum fuel will dominate the agenda in the meeting to be chaired by Finance Minister AMA Muhith.

Of the proposals, four will be placed by railway division of the Communications Ministry while three each by power division and energy division of the power and energy ministry. The water resources ministry, housing and public works ministry, and industries ministry will place one proposal each.

The railway division's proposals include import of 10 broad gauge (BG) locomotive under the Indian credit, turnkey tender for rehabilitation of Chandpur railway section, import of 20 sets of metre gauge (MG) diesel electric multiple unit for railway and track doubling between Laksam and Chinkastana on Dhaka-Chittagong railway route.

The energy division's proposal include import of 150,000 tonnes of diesel and 80,000 tonnes of furnace oil from ENOC of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), import of 640,000 tonnes of diesel and 170,000 tonnes of jet fuel from Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and fixing of premium for import of petroleum fuel from MIDOR of Egypt.

The power division's proposals include awarding contract for 200-300MW peaking power plant at Ghorasal, importing 8.15 million compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) bulb for Rural Electrification Board (REB), and setting up 100-150MW dual-fuel independent power producer plant in Kaliakoir of Gazipur.

The industries ministry will seek approval for import of 14,000 tonnes of urea fertiliser while the housing and public works ministry will seek approval for awarding contract for construction of apartment complex at Mirpur in the city.

ATTACK ON FARROQUE

Punishment to policemen demanded

DU CORRESPONDENT

The opposition BNP-backed teachers of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday demanded punishment to the policemen responsible for the attack on Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abdin Farroque during hartal called by four-party alliance on Wednesday.

They also demanded reintroduction of the caretaker government system.

They placed the demands while speaking at a human chain programme at the feet of Aparajeyo Bangla on the university campus.

The white panel teachers also expressed concern over the prevailing law and order situation in the country.

The police attack on an opposition chief whip can not happen in a civilised society, they said, adding that such an incident can lead the country to instability.

Convener of the white panel Prof Sadrul Amin spoke at the programme on behalf of the teachers.

Former vice chancellor SMA Faiz, former pro-vice chancellor Prof AFM Yusuf Haider and Prof Abul Hasnat were present at the programme.



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