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SECOND EDITION

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28 PAGES PLUS STAR LIFESTYLE PRICE : Tk 10.00

PRE-1/11 MANOEUVRINGS

Wikileaks US diplomatic cables reveal failed scramble for congenial solution

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GNAWING QUESTIONS

Syed Saad Andaleeb ponders on whys and wherefores of Indian PM's visit

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STOSUR CRUSHES WILLIAMS

Samantha Stosur shocks Serena Williams in straight sets to win the US Open

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BNP's road march, rallies start in Oct

RAKIB HASANT SUMAN

BNP will organise road marches towards seven divisional headquarters and public rallies in 19 districts across the country from early October, aiming to drum up public support for its demand for restoration of the caretaker government system.

The decision was disclosed yesterday in a meeting of Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, party's acting secretary general; joint secretary general and organising secretaries at the party's central office at Nayapaltan in the capital.

Meeting sources said Chairperson Khaleda Zia may declare the programmes in a public

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Padma Bridge in a quagmire

WB freezes on short-listed questionable companies; govt seeks to know the names, move on without those

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The construction of Padma Bridge will face a long delay if the World Bank does not accept the government's proposal to start the work soon without involving the firms accused of corruption.

The proposal was made when WB Vice-President Isabel M Guerrero met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Sunday.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith, who was present at the meeting, said this at a press briefing at his secretariat office yesterday.



Bridge project.

Muhith told journalists, "We cannot wait for an indefinite period. We have told them [World Bank] to officially communicate to us the names of the companies accused of corruption. The government will drop those from the short-list and start the construction."

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Metro rail stops at air force red signal

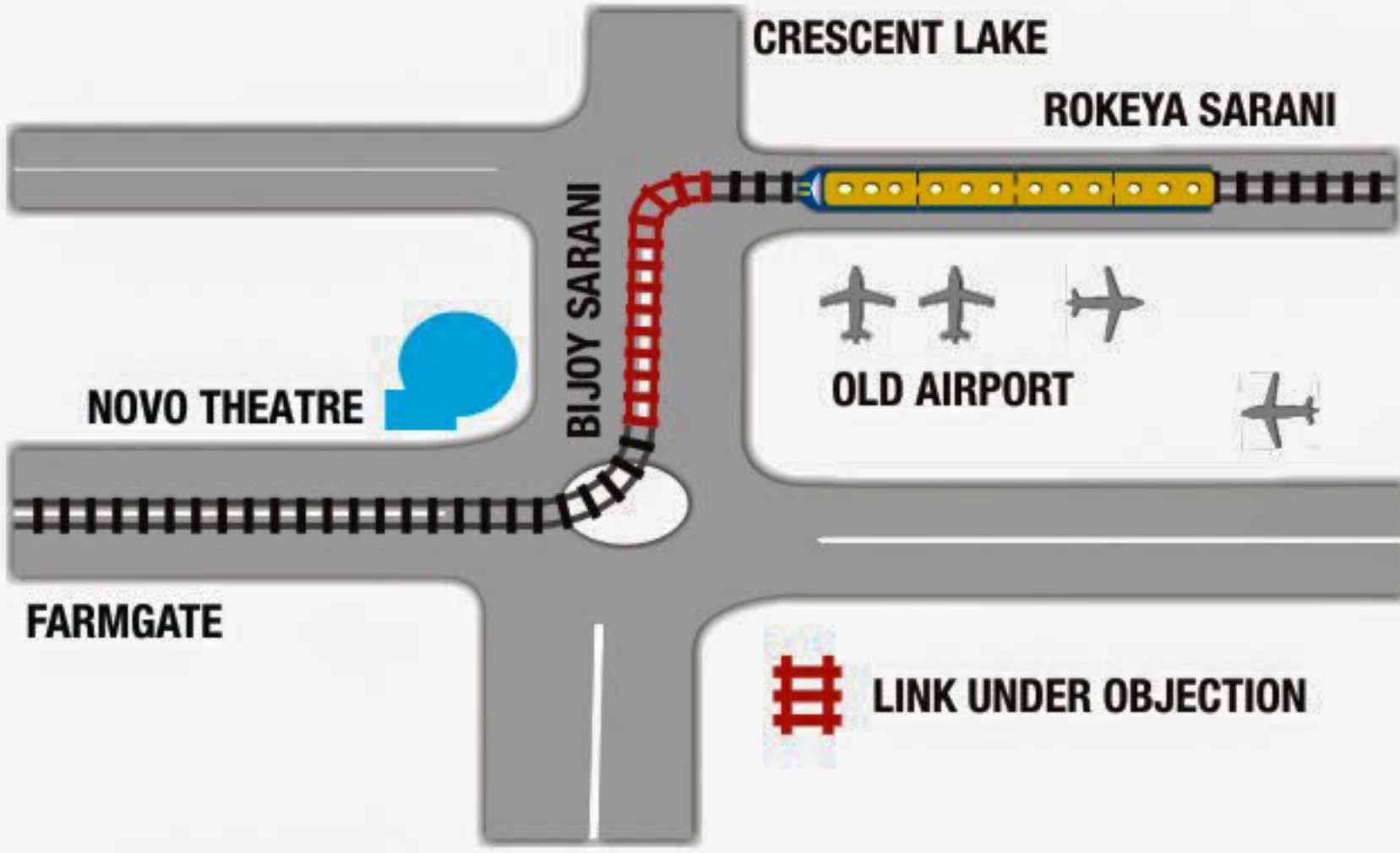
Bijoy Sarani link seen as risky for security; financier Jica upset; meeting adjourned for today

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

Construction of the much anticipated metro rail looks uncertain as the government might bring another modification in its alignment in the face of the air force's objection to the current alignment running across Bijoy Sarani.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica), keen to provide 80 percent of the \$1.8 billion project cost as a soft loan, hinted to the communications ministry in February that it might not even give the fund if the alignment is modified again, said the ministry sources.

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Dredging gone hibernating

Gross negligence of water transport authority led to serious navigability loss in Padma

MORSHED ALI KHAN

Gross negligence in conducting timely dredging to keep the ferry channels in the Padma navigable has led to the disruption of ferry services between Mawa and Paturia, causing sufferings to thousands of people.

Officials of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC), which operates the ferry service, said they had repeatedly warned Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) in the recent past about rapid loss of navi-

gability of the Padma and the Jamuna, but nothing was done timely to dredge and keep the ferry channels fit for service.

"As soon as a shoal appeared in the channel (Mawa-Paturia) we wrote to the dredging department (of BIWTA) on August 16 urging them to take urgent measures to remove it by dredging," said MA Matin, BIWTC deputy general manager (commerce) at Paturia ferry terminal.

BIWTA started dredging when it was too late. It put in place three dredgers before the Eid-ul-Fitr

(Aug31) but did not start dredging the channel before September 6 for mysterious reasons. By then the Padma waters started to recede with the current too fierce to keep the dredger and the spoil pipes stable on the channel, BIWTC officials said.

The navigational routes between Mawa and Char Janajat were blocked over a strip of 1,000 metres at Hazra point and Naodoba point.

The officials mentioned that the crisis at the two very important ferry terminals has occurred due to "utter

SEE PAGE 13 COL 5

Ferries run below their capacity

STAR REPORT

The ferries plying on the Paturia-Daulatdia route were forced to cut down their capacity by more than fifty percent due to low navigability of Padma River.

The transportation of goods-laden trucks has been suffering a huge setback due to the capacity reduction coupled with frequent suspension of ferry services on the route.

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Due to poor navigability, only one-way ferry traffic at a time is being allowed in the channel between Mawa and Char Janajat. The navigational route has been blocked over a strip of 1,000 metres at Hazra and Naodoba points following negligence in dredging. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

WikiLeaks

PRE-1/11 AFFAIRS

Army at heart of crisis formulas

Politicians, businessmen, civil society suggested military solutions

STAR REPORT

In the wake of escalating political tensions in 2006, various political factions, echoing suggestions by business community and civil society, approached foreign missions with several proposals and sought military solutions.

The most common variation had the army persuading the then president/chief adviser Iajuddin Ahmed to postpone elections, which was slated for January 22, 2007, for six months to two years; to resign as the chief adviser; and to appoint a new CA and council

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'Coffee Group' BNP bins WikiLeaks cables

Both AL, BNP saw bias in its diplomacy

REAZ AHMAD

In weeks preceding the 1/11 political changeover of 2007, foreign diplomats then stationed in Dhaka had hectic backstage parleys under a diplomatic circle known as "Coffee Group".

And often they took the risks of being branded either as pro-Awami League or as pro-BNP by the

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The BNP finds "re-emergence of a pattern of discrediting politicians and the prevailing politics" with the aim of depoliticising Bangladesh in the cables of US embassy in Dhaka which were leaked recently by

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STOCK SLIDE

Investors take to streets

SARWAR A CHOWDHURY

Stocks slid to a two and a half month low yesterday, triggering mild protests in Motijheel.

The flow of traffic between Shapla Chattar and Ittefaq crossing also came to a halt for three hours, causing congestion on either side of the commercial hub.

Protesters, under the 'Capital Market Investors Unity Council' platform, set fire to paper and wooden materials, chanted slogans and demanded resignation of the finance minister and central bank governor.

They also tried entering the Dhaka Stock Exchange office, but they were stopped by police.

The general index of the premier bourse plunged 1.6 percent to 5,920 points yesterday.

The market lost 300 points in the last seven days, a sign of deeper market volatility ahead, prompting the stockmarket regulator and other stakeholders to sit in immediate meetings.

The Bangladesh stockmarket witnessed a price debacle, which is inevitable after overvaluation, in January-February. But this time around, the market is facing a severe fund crisis, resulting in low turnover in the last one month, analysts and stockbrokers said.

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উন্নয়নের পথে প্রসারিত সেবার অঙ্গীকারে বিভিবিএল এখন নারায়ণগঞ্জে...

আজ ১৩ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০১১

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