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WIDENING OF CTG-DOHAZARI ROAD

Inept contractor fails the project

Govt too to be blamed; Tk 80cr soft loan to be returned to ADB

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

A soft loan of Tk 80 crore for a highway expansion project is set to be returned to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as the authorities failed to widen a vital stretch of the Chittagong and Cox's Bazar highway.

The highway-widening project remains in limbo due to the incompetence of its contractor and the government's delay in acquiring land, officials at the communications ministry have said.

The ADB had financed repairs and widening of the 26.7km Chittagong-Dohazari Road, which is part of the Chittagong-Cox's Bazar highway and the adjacent 6km Patia bypass.

The road is now in a shabby state.

Besides, the government is locked in a legal battle with the contractor to realise Tk 10 crore it had given to the firm as mobilisation advance.

The Roads and Highways Department on May 20, 2008, had struck a deal with Islam Trading Consortium Ltd (ITCL) to expand the roads and three small bridges by June 2011. The total project cost is Tk 98.45 crore.

RHD officials said though the ITCL had mobilised some staff and equipment, it initially failed to advance the project as the government could not hand over the required land to them.

Later they were given the land in February 2010, but they could not resume



This is the only road that links Chittagong with Cox's Bazar, Bandarban and Teknaf. But such an important route is too narrow to accommodate a bus and a truck at a time side by side. The photo was shot recently.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

BNP trashes report on ISI-Khaleda

STAR REPORT

The main opposition BNP has rejected a report on a Dubai-based newspaper, according to which Pakistan's intelligence agency Inter-Services Intelligence gave Khaleda Zia Rs 50 million prior to the 1991 parliamentary election.

"It's absolutely false and ridiculous. It is beyond imagination that a

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MARCH 12 RALLY

Check-in 'restricted' in city hotels

BNP finds accommodation hard to manage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition BNP is struggling with the accommodation of those expected to join its March 12 rally from outside the capital as most of the city hotel and community centre owners are refusing them room.

Party acting Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Aalmgir yesterday alleged that the police were mounting pressure on hotel owners for not to provide rooms to opposition men.

Other party leaders also alleged that law enforcers had imposed an unofficial restriction on city hotels over allowing anyone from outside the capital from March 9-12.

Contacted, some city hotel managers, preferring anonymity, admitted

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Hasina warns against violence

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed ministers and the administration to stay alert to the BNP's March 12 grand rally in the capital, saying the opposition might carry out subversive activities to destabilise the country.

Asking the home ministry to investigate whether there was any possible anti-government plot, she said the ministry should be cautious so that the BNP cannot repeat what it did on December 18 last year.

Hasina, also the ruling Awami League chief, was speaking at a weekly cabinet meeting at the secretariat.

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India pledges to ratify Mujib-Indira treaty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

India has informed Bangladesh that it would place the historic Mujib-Indira treaty of 1974 in its parliament for discussion about its ratification.

The assurance came following a formal request made by Home Minister Shahara Khatun during her February 24-25 visit to India when she met Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee and her counterpart P Chidambaram.

Former Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi signed the treaty with

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on May 16, 1974 to settle border issues between the two neighbouring countries. Bangladesh has ratified the treaty, amended the Constitution accordingly, and gave Berubari to India, but India is still to ratify it.

The home minister yesterday presented the outcome of her India visit at the weekly cabinet meeting. Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan later briefed reporters on the meeting.

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A BIWTA excavator removes soil from a canal in the city's Rayerbazar yesterday to make the water body free-flowing. But the agency dumps the dug-out earth right on the bank, making it possible for the canal to get filled up again. The soil can easily be washed back into the canal.

Nine charged with killing of 2 SUST students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Police yesterday pressed charges against nine people in connection with the murder of two students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) in December last year.

The accused are boatman Gulzar Miah, Soil Miah, Shaheen Ahmed, Lal Miah, Sayem Miah, Jalal Miah, Rakib Ahmed, Abdullah and Selim Ahmed.

All of them are now behind bars, said police.

Local fishermen on December 17 found the bodies of Khairul Kabir and Dipankar Ghosh Anik floating in Chenger Khal (canal) at Putimara under Sadar upazila, some four kilometres off the campus.

They were second year students at chemical engineering and polymer science department of SUST. They had joined an excursion there the previous day with their friends and allegedly came under attack by a gang of muggers.

The university authorities had lodged a murder case on that day with Jalalabad Police Station.

Sanjib Das, a sub-inspector of the police station, filed the charge sheet at the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court here.

"We've managed to arrest them on information from boatman Gulzar Miah," said the SI, also the investigating officer of the case.

PM's advisers pro-Indian

Now alleges Ershad

STAR REPORT

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad yesterday blasted the advisers to the prime minister for their "pro-Indian attitude", reports UNB.

"Are they the people of Bangladesh or India? They don't speak in favour of Bangladesh, rather speak for India. Where do they come from? We don't need such advisers," he said.

Ershad was addressing a wayside rally at Gozaria bus stand in Munshiganj around 11:00am while

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PRAYER TIMING		March 6
Asan	Jamaat	
Fajr	5-15	5-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-05	6-10
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

The Daily Star

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ONLINE POLL

Do you think BNP's allegation that the government is obstructing people's participation in the March 12 BNP rally in the capital is justified?

Yes (21.9%)
No (73.9%)
No Comments (4.2%)
TOTAL VOTES: 333

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think BNP's allegation that the government is obstructing people's participation in the March 12 BNP rally in the capital is justified?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT
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YOU MAY ALSO VOTE AT
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No decision yet on e-voting machine

CEC talks on use of EVM in next JS polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission is yet to take any decision on the use of electronic voting machines in the next parliamentary polls, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad said yesterday.

Talking to reporters on the EC Secretariat premises, the CEC said the EC would however make preparations should they decide to use EVMs in the next polls scheduled for January 2014.

"We did not decide whether to use EVM in a large election like the parliamentary polls. However we asked the secretariat to make preparation to avoid any problem at the last moment," Rakibuddin said.

His predecessor ATM Shamsul Huda led EC introduced EVM on a limited scale in polls to city corporations of Chittagong and Narayanganj and on larger scale in Comilla. The then EC had also announced that EVM would be used in the next

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SPELLING BEE

10 spellers move to 2nd round

SHAHNOOR RABBANI

The Daily Star Spelling Bee contest organiser champs21 yesterday visited Pabna Cadet College and Barisal Cadet College where a total of 10 spellers made it through the first round.

The first round will end on March 10 while the second round (divisional

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Students of Pabna Cadet College take on the Spelling Bee challenge yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR