

PADMA BRIDGE
Construction to begin by Feb next year

Says Obaidul Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communications Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday once again reiterated that construction work of Padma bridge will begin by the next February in 2013.

"Please wait and see whether I could keep my words to start the construction work by that time. If you find difference, I will do what a responsible politician should do," he said.

Quader, also the railway minister, was speaking as the chief guest at a roundtable on road accidents organised by Society of Surgeons of Bangladesh at the National Press Club in the capital.

"We have three alternative sources of getting funds for constructing the bridge," he said adding, "If the World Bank does not finance the bridge, we will seek funds from the alternative sources".

"If we fail to get the funds from the alternative sources, we will start the construction by our own funding," Quader said.

Talking about road accidents in the country, he put emphasis on raising awareness among drivers and commuters. He urged all to launch a massive campaign to raise the awareness.

The minister said the communication ministry will take steps for ensuring the safety on roads in the country.

"I can not bring any magical change overnight. I am working hard and I need cooperation from all. I am giving priority on road maintenance," he added.



Nishat Majumder, the first Bangladeshi woman to conquer Mount Everest, receives a crest from State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Capt (ret'd) AB Tajul Islam, on her left, at a reception programme Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad Command Council organised for her on its premises in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Ecneec approves Tk 3,039cr dev projects

UNB, Dhaka

The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecneec) yesterday approved eight development projects involving Tk 3,039 crore.

The approval came at an Ecneec meeting at the National Economic Council conference room in the capital with Ecneec Chairperson and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Briefing reporters afterwards, Planning Division acting secretary Bhuiyan Shafiqul Islam said, of the total, Tk 830 crore will come from the public coffers, Tk 2,096 crore from project assistance and Tk 113 crore from community sponsors.

Department of Public Health and Engineering will implement the first project, "Bangladesh rural water supply and sanitation", by June 2016.

A total Tk 682 crore will be spent to supply piped water to arsenic and salinity-prone villages of 33 districts. World Bank will provide a credit of Tk 555 crore, community sponsors will provide Tk 113 crore and the government would provide the rest.

Besides, non-piped water supply system will be constructed in areas having acute salinity, iron and arsenic problem. Over three lakh low-cost latrines would also be constructed for the ultra poor of selected unions.

Three projects are meant for the railways sector's development.

The first, "Bangladesh Railway sector development project", will cost Tk 396 crore, of which, Asian Development Bank will provide Tk 322 crore while the government will provide the rest.

The second is "Rehabilitation of Bangladesh Railway main sections (West zone) (1st Revised) project" involving Tk 150 crore and the last is "Procurement of 11 MG Locomotives for Bangladesh Railway" involving Tk 481 crore.

Another "Water management development project (2nd revised)" will cost Tk 982 crore, of which, International Development Association will loan Tk 741 crore and the Netherlands will provide Tk 143 crore as grant.

The government would finance the remaining three projects.

They are the dredging of Pashur Channel Harbour of Mongla Port (1st revised) project (Tk 132 crore), construction/rehabilitation of ferries and pontoons project (Tk 129 crore), and expansion and development of Chittagong College-Kapaspola road (1st revised) (Tk 90 crore).

The Ecneec members -- Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Planning Minister AK Khandker, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury and Communications Minister Obaidul Quader -- were present at the meeting.

Law coming to stop migration fraud

Says expatriates' welfare minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Within the next six months, the government will enact a migration law to stop fraudulence in the country's manpower export, Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Khandker Mosharraf Hossain said yesterday.

"The law will have provisions of stern punishment for those found involved in fraudulent activities," he said in parliament.

He also said Bangladesh would "soon" start sending workers in Malaysia after an agreement between the two countries was signed.

Some recruiting agents have been blamed for issuing fake work permits, visas and even passports to migrating workers.

The minister said some 17.55 lakh Bangladeshi workers got jobs in 143 countries in the last three and a half year-tenure of the present government. Of them, nearly one lakh were female workers.

BANGABANDHU'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Youths will learn true history: PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The new generation can learn the true history of Bangladesh's birth and of the Pakistani era by reading "The Unfinished Memories of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman", said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday.

She was addressing a programme at Gono Bhaban after the book's publisher, University Press Limited, handed the book over to her and her sister, Sheikh Rehana.

Hasina said she and her sister had kept their father's writings as it was so that the present generation could learn about the country's true history. Rehana said the new generation must read the book to know their

roots.

At one point, the two sisters became emotional, narrating how they had to struggle to preserve their father's writings since August 1975.

"The writings of our father used to belong to us and now it belongs to the country's people," said Hasina, adding that she had completed the preface while she was put in a special jail during the last caretaker government.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Dr Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury, Baby Moudud MP and National Prof Dr AF Salahuddin Ahmed were present on the occasion.

COURT VANDALISM CASE

25 pro-BNP lawyers' bail extended

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday extended bail period of 25 pro-BNP lawyers until July 22 in their connection with vandalism at the metropolitan sessions and district judges' court last month.

First Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Shahidul Islam Faruque passed the order after their lawyers submitted a petition seeking extension of their bail term.

Another Dhaka court on June 3 extended their bail term till yesterday.

On May 22, members of Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum, a platform of pro-BNP lawyers, boycotted all the judges' and magistrates' courts in the capital and vandalised the courts, protesting a court order sending BNP lawmaker Mahub Uddin Khokon to jail in an arson case.

Two days later, the lawyers got bail from the High Court until June 3.

Abdul Islam, a sub-inspector at Kotwali Police Station, also the investigation officer of the case, placed the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court in Dhaka on May 31.

The charge sheet submitted under the Speedy Trial Act would allow the judge to complete the trial within 30 working days. However, if some of the accused abscond, then the trial may take up to 60 working days, according to the law.

25 LAWYERS

Mohammad Borhanuddin, Sanaullah Miah, Mohsin Miah, Golam Mostafa Khan, Khorshed Alam, Iqbal Ahmed, Masud Ahmed Talukder, Helal Uddin, Omar Faruque, Abdul Nur Bhuiyan, Abdul Khaleque Milon, Jamal Ahmed Dulon, Mohammad Nuruzzaman, Masud Rana, Monir, Jibon, Jakob, Didar (1), Didar (2), Ershadul Haque, Fardin, Mahmudur Rahman Romel, Kamal Hossain, Simki Imam and Shamima Akhter Shammi.

RESCUED TIGER CUBS

Young felines doing well

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The three Bengal tiger cubs rescued from a wildlife smuggler's house nine days ago have adjusted quite well to their new home in the National Botanical Garden in the capital's Mirpur.

The young felines were shifted from a private mini zoo in Hatirpool to their latest abode on Friday.

Frolicking in a room measuring 15.6 square metres, the cubs seemed to be faring quite well with caregivers attending to their needs.

Two veterinarians, one from Dulahazra Safari Park and the other from the Forestry Department have also been assigned to keep an eye on the cubs' health.

"The cubs are thriving on minced meat and Lactogen-1, a brand of infant formula milk", said Didarul Islam, a caregiver who was brought from Dulahazra Safari Park to look after the cubs.

Three specialists from Wildlife Friends of Thailand (WFFT) also brought food and toys for the young felines while paying them a visit, he added.

On June 11, a Rapid Action Battalion team rescued the tiger cubs from the residence of Abdul Kader, a wildlife smuggler in the capital's Shyamoli. Kader and his elder son Masud Hossain have been on the run since then.

After Dhaka Zoo and other government wildlife organisations refused to take the cubs in, they were handed over to Abdul Wadud, a breeder of exotic birds and owner of the mini zoo.

However, since the environment at the mini zoo was not ideal for the cubs they were shifted to National Botanical Garden.