



Even light rain creates such waterlogging on this road in the capital's Tikatuli. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Padma bridge with local fund possible

Say experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A national consensus is necessary for building Padma bridge using only local funds, speakers said at a roundtable yesterday.

This is Bangladesh's chance to be independent and prove that it can implement a big project with its own fund, they said at the roundtable discussion held at the Institute of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh (IDEB).

IDEB organised the discussion on "People's expected Padma Bridge: present context and national responsibility". "A country cannot depend on foreign funds for long-term development," said Dr Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, a renowned economist.

"If we change our mindset we can build the bridge independently," he said.

The bridge can be funded without affecting the country's balance of payment and foreign exchange reserve, he said.

Khondkar Ibrahim Khaled, chairman of Bangladesh Krishi Bank, said the World Bank is repeatedly talking about corruption but the bank itself is corrupted.

The WB time and again recommended a Chinese company despite the evaluation committee declaring the company unqualified to build the bridge, he said.

Bangladesh can raise the fund through saving about Tk 4,000 crore from development budget, imposing surcharge, and issuing NRB bonds, Khaled said.

Appreciating government's move to build the bridge with local fund, former vice chancellor of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) AMM Shafiqullah said about 60 percent of Buet students go abroad after graduating because of lack of jobs.

"Here we have an opportunity to prove our qualifications," he said, adding that willingness, honest persons, and patriotism is necessary to build the Padma bridge.

Bhorer Kagoj Editor Shyamal Dutta said an international conspiracy was behind the cancellation of the fund by the WB.

Local Government Secretary Abu Alam Mohammad Shahid Khan said government service holders are ready to sacrifice any monetary value to raise fund for the bridge.

General Secretary of IDEB Shamsur Rahman proposed imposing surcharge against mobile subscribers and taking annual Tk 10,000 levy from each of the 16 lakh different vehicles in the country.

AKMA Hamid, president of IDEB, presided over the roundtable.

Off-grid areas to get power supply soon

Says Enamul Haque

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is trying to bring the country's off-grid areas under electricity coverage to fulfil people's demand of supplying power in the areas, said State Minister for Power and Energy Mohammad Enamul Haque yesterday.

"People in off-grid areas want electricity at any cost," he said. Enamul Haque was talking to reporters after attending the deputy commissioners' (DCs) conference at the secretariat in the capital.

Prime minister's Energy Adviser Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury also talked to the reporters at the secretariat. He said the DCs requested the government to ensure smooth supply of power by repairing old electricity cables and power substations.

Tawfiq-e-Elahi said they asked the DCs to help the ministry to ensure uninterrupted power supply during Iftar and Sehri in the month of Ramadan.

He claimed that overall power supply situation in the country's rural areas has been improved.

"We have to keep up the situation by generating more power," he added.

Dipu Moni lays stress on emission cuts agreement

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni has called upon the world community for a legally binding agreement on emission cuts with participation of all states, developed and developing, to face climate change challenges.

She also called for institutionalisation of global compact in four recognised tracks of action--adaptation, mitigation, financing, and technology transfer.

The foreign minister, who is presently in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, made the calls at a meeting of the 19th Ministerial meeting of Asean Regional Forum (ARF) yesterday, says a press release.

Terming Bangladesh as among the most vulnerable countries to climate change, Dipu Moni laid stress on the engagement of the developed countries for effective action on adaptation and mitigation projects.

She also touched upon the multiple

challenges that Bangladesh and the island developing countries are facing due to climate vagaries.

The foreign ministers of all the Asean and major Asia-Pacific countries including China, Japan, Korea, Australia, New Zealand, France, UK, USA, Russia, Canada, India and Pakistan participated in this very important conference.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh foreign minister had bilateral meetings with her counterparts of China and Myanmar on the sideline of the ARF meeting.

Referring to the 2011 meetings between the Bangladesh prime minister and the president of Myanmar, the foreign ministers of the two countries reaffirmed their commitment to solve the problem of the Rohingya refugees and undocumented Myanmar nationals in Bangladesh at the earliest possible time.

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RMG worker dies as brick falls on him

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A garment worker was killed as a piece of brick fell on him from an under-construction building at Mohammadpur in the capital yesterday.

Joynal Abedin, 25, a worker at Four Brothers Garment, was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead around 3:30pm.

Mohammad Alal, a co-worker of Joynal, said a brick fell on Joynal's head from the factory's rooftop while entering it around 2:00pm.

Anwar Hossain, sub-inspector at Mohammadpur Police Station, said they were investigating whether proper safety measure were taken for the construction work.

Auto-rickshaw driver commits suicide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An auto-rickshaw driver allegedly killed himself by slitting his throat in the capital's Gopibagh yesterday noon.

The deceased Anwar Hossain, 30, had been living with his wife and two children at a rented house RK Mission Road.

Quoting Tumpa Begum, wife of the driver, police said Anwar was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Anwar was suffering from financial problems after selling his CNG-run auto-rickshaw two months back, said police.

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