

MAHISASAN-SHAHBAJPUR RAIL ROUTE India moves for revival

STAR REPORT

New Delhi has sent a proposal to Dhaka for reviving the defunct railway transit facility between India and Bangladesh through Mahisasan point in Karimganj district of Assam, reports The Times of India.

This has been mooted when work for setting up the 13km railway track is about to be over soon to establish a railway link between Agartala in Tripura and Akhaura in Bangladesh.

Mahisasan is a border railway station. The Bangladesh side is Shahbajpur (also known as Latu) in Sylhet.

The Mahisasan-Shahbajpur route has not been operational since December, 1996 due to lack of traffic.

Lok Sabha member (Congress) from Karimganj segment Lalit Mohan Shuklabaidya said Union Minister for Railways Pawan Kumar Bansal, in reply to his letter, said New Delhi has sent a communication to Bangladesh to reopen the facility through Mahisasan. However, the reply is awaited.

"In September last year, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during his visit to Dhaka took up the issue with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. She agreed to reopen the railway link between Mahisasan in India and Khulna in Bangladesh," said Bansal in the letter.

"We are waiting for a positive action from Dhaka," added Bansal.

Sources said Mahisasan point also assumes importance in course of the proposed Trans-Asian Railway.



Finance Minister AMA Muhith, second from left, and Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, right, offer prayers after the inauguration of the Sylhet MC College hostel reconstruction project, which started yesterday. The hostel was severely damaged as pro-Awami League activists set it on fire on July 8.

PHOTO: STAR

ASHULIA FIRE DU teachers demand punishment to responsible

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 237 teachers of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday demanded that those responsible for the deaths in the recent Ashulia garment factory fire be immediately handed down exemplary punishment.

Expressing condolence and resentment, the teachers in a statement demanded that the government immediately makes public all probe reports over the fire and implements Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006 in line with International Labour Organization conventions.

The fire in Tazreen Fashions Ltd on November 24 nights claimed 111 lives and left over 100 injured.

The teachers also demanded that the government establishes an effective chief factory inspector's office to stop recurrence of such incidents, says a press release yesterday.

Garment factory owners must ensure workers' safety otherwise immediate punitive measures must be taken against them, they said.

The owners, BGMEA, the government and the garment importers concerned must provide compensation for the victims and their families and rehabilitate them, they said.

They suggested constructing a memorial at the scene of the fire to pay respect to the deceased and forming an effective body comprising the workers, owners and the government to make working relations time befitting and modern.

Asia young leaders summit begins tomorrow in Savar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The three-day 7th Asia 21 Young Leaders Summit, a congregation of young leaders of the Asia-Pacific region, will be held in Brac Centre for Development Management in Savar from tomorrow.

Themed "Asia 21 in 2020: Catalyzing Changes, Sustaining Impact", the summit will focus to prepare a regional development framework and on regional affairs over the coming decades.

The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC), among others, are the organisers

while The Daily Star is the media partner.

With Asia undergoing rapid changes, its younger generations will shoulder greater responsibility in shaping its future, said the organisers.

Over 100 under-40 accomplished young leaders will represent over 20 countries in the summit, said BYLC President Ejaj Ahmed at a press conference in the capital's Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

The participants will delve deeply into a vision for Asia in 2020 to assess their roles as civic-minded leaders and explore ways to enhance and sustain their collective capacities,

headed. The young leaders from Bangladesh will be able to discuss current domestic and global issues with participants from the Asia region, said Secretary to the ministry Tarique-ul-Islam.

The female leaders especially have great scopes to discuss issues on women empowerment, dowry and domestic violence, he said.

The Asia 21 Young Leaders Initiative is an associate body of Asia Society, an international organisation dedicated to strengthening relationships and deepening understanding among the region's communities and the US.

Rumour of factory fire leaves worker dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A female worker died while 30 others were injured when panic-stricken employees of a garment factory in the capital tried to escape to safety on a rumour of fire.

Marzina Khatun, 23, died at ZH Sikder Women's Medical College and Hospital. Of the injured, 17 were admitted to Sikder hospital, while three were treated at Dhaka Medical College Hospital and 10 others at local clinics.

Sub-Inspector Kamal Uddin of Mohammadpur Police Station said the railing of the second floor staircase collapsed succumbing to the weight of rushing workers. About 40 people fell down-

stairs due to this. Marzina was crushed under the people who fell down.

An injured female worker said smoke had been seen coming out of a piece of machinery on the 4th floor of the seven-storey building. People outside had also noticed the smoke and raised the alarm. The shouting from outside had led to the panic, she added.

A fire service official said they had received a fire call around 3:15pm. When four fire engines reached the factory, Apparel Today, near the Mohammadpur embankment area, they found no fire, he said, adding that they had found about 40 injured people on the ground floor.



Sultana Kamal, chairperson of the trustee board of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), speaks at a press conference at Brac Centre Inn in the capital yesterday. TIB organised the programme to disclose a recent corruption report of Transparency International. TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman, left, and trustee M Hafizuddin Khan, right, were also present.

PHOTO: STAR

Man arrested for identity fraud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel arrested a youth from Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the capital yesterday morning on charge of deceiving people and different companies in the guise of government high officials.

The arrest of Imdadul Islam Sohel, 25, was made at Manik Miah Avenue around 9:30am after an official of Pran Group filed a complaint with Rab-2 against the gang of Sohel a few days back, Rab officials said.

According to Deputy Commander of Rab-2 Maj Md Anwarul Haque, the arrestee with his cohorts has already collected money from Gorib and Gorib Garment, Tata group, Nitol group, Rangs Automobiles, Colombia Group ranging from Tk 15,000 to Tk 3 lakh in the name of establishing old homes, madrasas, orphanages, and treatment to a road accident victim.

Rab arranged a press conference at Rab-2 office at Agargaon yesterday where they produced the arrestee before the media.

Addressing the conference, the deputy commander said the gang used to request high officials of private companies over phone to donate money to charity organi-

sations which do not exist. He said the callers introduced themselves as top government officials like home secretary and deputy commissioner (DC).

"Recently the gang has called Pran Group's owner and requested him to donate Tk 10 lakh for the development of a madrasa and orphanage. The owner later informed us of the matter," Maj Haque said.

Rab arrested the youth when a gang of three came to receive the money, he said, adding that the two other youths--Obaidul Islam and Aminul Islam--managed to flee the spot.

Pran Group General Manager Maj (ret'd) Moinul Islam said they informed the incident to the Rab after contacting the caller, who claimed himself to be the home secretary.

An official of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) Md Mizanur Rahman told the press conference that the gang asked for Tk 3 lakh from their director for some charity works. They went to the home ministry with a cheque for Tk 1 lakh for handing it over to the authorities and found the home secretary to be totally unaware about the matter.

Local govt officials must play pro-people role

Workshop told
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People-oriented role of local government officials, as directed by the Upazila Parishad Act 2009, must be ensured to make the local government body more functional, democratic and accountable, policymakers said at a workshop yesterday.

National policymakers, 25 secretaries to different ministries, and six divisional commissioners participated in the workshop organised by Upazila Governance Project (UZGP) and Local Government Division (LGD) at a city hotel.

The policy-makers also recommended appointment of a full-time secretary with the rank and status of a class II officer and an assistant accounts officer at upazila parishads to streamline the accounting and auditing.

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