

Muhammad Ali Sorcar new envoy to Germany

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT



The government has decided to appoint Muhammad Ali Sorcar as the new ambassador of Bangladesh to Germany. He is now serving as the ambassador to the Netherlands. The post of ambassador at Bangladesh mission in Berlin fell vacant recently as the government has withdrawn Mosud Mannan from Germany. Muhammad Ali belongs to the 1986 batch of BCS (Foreign Affairs) Cadre. He served in Bangladesh's permanent mission to UN in New York and Bangladesh embassy in Brussels. Muhammad Ali holds an MBBS degree from Mymensingh Medical College and a masters degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at the Tufts University in USA.



The road connecting Jatrabari and Demra in the capital is already muddied and riddled with potholes. Moreover, street vendors illegally occupy half of it by haphazardly setting up shops, leaving little room for vehicles to pass. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

BNP to always stay by Prof Yunus

Says senior leader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP will always stay by Prof Muhammad Yunus and Grameen Bank in the future, party Vice Chairman Shamsher Mabin Chowdhury said yesterday. Shamser said the bank's contribution for the development of the rural people of Bangladesh would remain as a rare example in history. "So, the BNP wants to see the success of the bank in the future. Our party will be always on the side of Yunus and his institution," he said. Shamser spoke to the media after conferring a citation on behalf of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia on the Noble laureate in recognition of his achievement as the first Bangladeshi to win USA's highest civilian award, the Congressional Gold Medal, on April 17. Shamser and Osman Faruk, an adviser to the BNP chairperson, handed over the citation to Prof Yunus at the capital's Yunus Centre last evening. Yunus thanked the BNP and its chairperson for giving him the citation. Faruk said, "The nation is proud of Yunus. So, it is a duty for all of us to defend his honour as well as Grameen Bank."

ROOPPUR POWER PLANT

Govt approves \$45m for feasibility

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday approved \$45.9 million for conducting surveys and feasibility studies for construction of the much-talked-about Rooppur nuclear power plant in Pabna, to produce 2,000 megawatt (MW) of electricity. The cabinet committee on purchase, chaired by Finance Minister AMA Muhith awarded the work to the Russian state-owned company Atomstroyexport for constructing the plant. The Russian company will conduct various works including an engineering survey at the Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) site, engineering and hydro-meteorological survey, engineering and geodetic survey, environmental studies, seismological and seismic-technical studies. The government has taken a four-year project worth Tk 5,087 crore from March 2013 to 2017 for completion of the works of the first phase of the plant.

The Russian government will give \$500 million or 79 percent of the project cost as hard loan to the Bangladesh government, as per an agreement signed during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Russia in January this year. Science and Technology Ministry officials said the loan will be repaid from the Russian government's credit, at an annual interest of 6 months' LIBOR rate plus one percent margin. However, the LIBRO rate will never cross 3 percent, they said. The loan will be repaid in five years, starting in March 2018, with two instalments in a year. The purchase committee also appointed Bangladesh Diesel Plan as contractor for land development for construction of 1320MW coal-fired power plant at Rampal. The government will pay Tk127.33 crore to the contractor to develop the land. The committee also approved the proposal for importing 50,000 tonnes of wheat at a cost of \$310.88 per tonne.

TORTURED WOMAN'S DEATH

Husband, 9 others sued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family members of a newlywed woman, who died at a hospital after being tortured allegedly by her in-laws, filed a case against 10 people, including her husband, in this connection. The deceased is Monira Parvin, 20, a second year student of Nikunja Model College. Victim's younger sister Habiba Akhter said Monira secretly married Nasir Uddin, 22, last Monday after a four-year relationship and took shelter at Nasir's friend's house. On Friday, Nasir took his wife to their house. Then, Monira's in-laws beat her mercilessly in front of Nasir, leaving her critically injured, said Khilkhet police. Monira's father Mohammad Mostafa told The Daily Star that Nasir's father had demanded Tk 10 lakh from him on Thursday night. Mostafa said Nasir's father threatened to kill him and his daughter if the demand is not met. Mostafa refused to pay. Nasir and his uncle Momtaz Uddin have been detained.



Awami League President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina raises a Bangladesh flag while inaugurating programmes to celebrate the party's founding anniversary at Dhanmondi road number 32 in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

40 YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC TIES

Bangladesh seeks more Korean investment

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

As the two countries celebrated 40 years of diplomatic ties, Bangladesh yesterday sought more Korean investments in building infrastructures, ports, roads and railways, and human resources. Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, addressing a seminar in the capital's Ruposhi Bangla hotel, sought Korea as a "strategic partner" to fulfill the government's vision of a digital Bangladesh by 2021. She urged diplomats, entrepreneurs and experts to devote their thoughts and ideas for devising tomorrow's partnership with Korea and find modalities for people-to-people contact. "Let's continue our effort and ensure development of human capital," she said. The seminar, "Strengthening Strategic Partnerships between Bangladesh and Korea", was jointly organised by the Korean Embassy in Dhaka and Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) commemorating the 40th anniversary. Addressing the seminar, prime minister's International Affairs Adviser Gowher Rizvi said Bangladesh was looking for partners and the investment under the public-private partnership (PPP). Gowher said most past Korean investments came into readymade garments and more

Korean companies should invest through PPP in Bangladesh's infrastructure. He also felt the necessity of government-to-government schemes for human resource development so that the youth could play a more meaningful role in economic development. Korean Ambassador in Dhaka Lee Yun-young said, "Time has come to put our heads together to discuss how deeply the two countries are committed to a shared future of growth and prosperity, and find ways to upgrade our relationship into strategic partnership." On trade issue, Lee Yun-young said 95 percent of Bangladeshi products were enjoying duty free access to Korea. "The export from Bangladesh to Korea is recently increasing drastically. I believe it is the healthy sign of mutually-beneficial relationship." He said on top of Korea's strong presence in the garment industry, Korean investment to Bangladesh was being further intensified and diversified into many innovative areas such as infrastructure, energy, and business service. "Not only big companies are expanding their investment, even small and medium enterprises are rushing out to explore business opportunities with Bangladeshi partners," he said.

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Focus on achievements

Speakers say at Unicef report launching ceremony

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The society should focus more on the achievements of children with disabilities rather than their shortcomings, said speakers at the launching ceremony of a Unicef report at a hotel in the capital. The report titled "State of the World's Children 2013" emphasises how societies can include children with disabilities because when they play a full part in society, everyone benefits. The report further states that children with disabilities are the least likely to receive health care or go to school. They are among the most vulnerable to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect-- because of social stigma or the economic cost. People usually show pity towards children with disabilities. But they have the right to be treated like others, said Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid at the programme. According to the report, there is little accurate data on the number of children with disabilities, what disabilities these children have and how it affects their lives. The Bangladesh government has launched a survey on June 1 to count the number of children with disabilities in the country and the result would be known within next few months, said Social Welfare Secretary Suraiya Begum. Children with disabilities are too often invisible in policies, data, and societies, said Arifa S Sharmin, communication manager, Unicef Bangladesh. Pascal Villeneuve, Unicef country representative, among others, spoke.

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