



MELODIES 'N' MEMORY

The Daily Star once again pays musical tribute to Suchitra Sen

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ITALIAN PM RESIGNS

Embattled Enrico Letta quits paving the way for centre-left Matteo Renzi

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Padma bridge needs \$2.1b forex in 5 yrs

Govt informs BB of year-wise requirement till FY 2017-18

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The Padma bridge project will require \$2.1 billion in foreign currencies in five fiscal years as the government looks to build the bridge by June 2018.

Of the sum, around \$200 million will be needed in this fiscal year, \$700 million in the next FY, \$600 million in FY16, \$500 million in FY17 and \$100 million in FY18. The forex reserve of the country is now over \$18 billion.

According to the Bridges Division's estimate in 2011, the bridge will cost \$2.56 billion, of which \$2.1 billion will be paid in foreign currency and the rest in local currency.

The Bangladesh Bank will issue the international consultants and contractors Letters of Comfort so that they do not feel insecure about the payments, the Bridges Division decided in a meeting early this month.

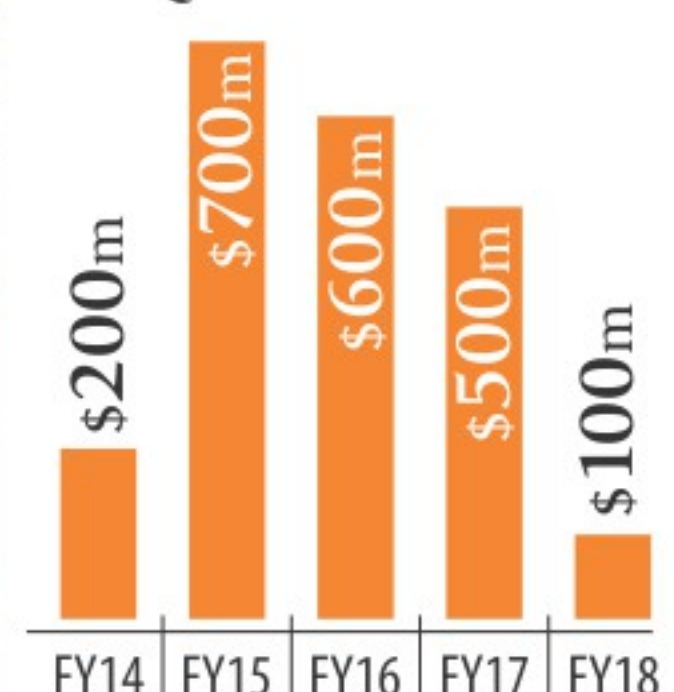
The February 3 meeting discussed the management of the foreign currency required for the project and the payments for the international contractors and consultancy firms.

The bridge authorities would inform the BB in advance the monthly requirement for foreign and local currencies, said an official of the

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YEAR-WISE FOREX REQUIREMENT



Total cost **\$2.56b** | Current reserve **\$18b**



The entire street between Golapshah Mazar and Bangabandhu Square in Gulistan is taken over by hawkers. It has been this way for years and locals allege that hawkers affiliated with the ruling party, whichever it may be, occupy the key street in an area plagued by congestion.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

FACTORY INSPECTION STANDARDS

BGMEA opposes retailers' plan

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The BGMEA has taken a stance against inspection standards set by platforms of foreign retailers and brands, saying many of their clauses are not in the national building code and too strict for small and medium garment factories in Bangladesh.

The Accord on Fire and Building Safety, a forum of 150 European retailers and brands, and the Alliance for Bangladesh Workers Safety, a platform of 26 US-based companies, were set to start visiting factories in a month or two.

But the inspection might get delayed as the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) last week wrote to the commerce and labour and employment ministries and expressed its opposition to the codes set by the Accord and Alliance.

"In the letters, I urged the government to re-fix the standards in line with the national

building code so that every factory can meet the standards," BGMEA President Atiqul Islam said yesterday.

Many small and medium factories will not be able to meet the standards set by the foreign bodies and subsequently lose business, he said.

The BGMEA boss added that many of the clauses of the Accord and Alliance are not included in the Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC).

"We want the Accord and Alliance to fully follow the BNBC," he told The Daily Star over the phone. "We do not agree on any code which is not in the BNBC."

An official of the Alliance, wishing anonymity, said, "The BGMEA might not agree on codes not mentioned in the BNBC because of higher cost and time-consuming process."

"Many factory buildings will have to be demolished if the standards are followed strictly."

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Standards too strict for small factories

BGMEA says standards must follow nat'l building code

Factory inspection may be delayed further

OFFLOADING ARMS

Nizami asked Nurul Amin to oversee

Court verdict says Nizami was in collusion with Babar in 10-truck arms smuggling

WASIM BIN HABIB and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Former industries minister Motiur Rahman Nizami was in collusion with former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar in the smuggling of the 10-truck arms and ammunition, according to the verdict in the smuggling case filed over the Chittagong arms haul.

Nizami, also the ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami, had sent his trusted additional secretary Nurul Amin to the CUFL rest house to oversee the offloading of the weapons on the night of the incident, the court said.

"Hence, it is understood that the then industries minister Motiur Rahman Nizami had links beforehand with the incident," Judge SM Mojibur Rahman of Chittagong Metropolitan Special Tribunal-1 said in the judgment.

The court came to the conclusion based on the testimonies of prosecution witnesses, including two top government officials, and circumstantial evidence of the cases.

Surprisingly, Nizami and Babar, two influential leaders of the then BNP-led four-party alliance, were not included in the initial probe though their names were widely discussed in relation to the smuggling.

They were included in 2011, following further investigation around

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LOKPAL BILL IMPASSE

Kejriwal quits as Delhi CM

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Arvind Kejriwal, the firebrand Chief Minister of Delhi, quit last night bringing to an end a tumultuous tenure of one and half months in office on top of an anti-graft civil society movement.

Kejriwal took the decision to step down at a meeting of his cabinet here, soon after Delhi legislature, where his Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) lacked majority of its own, blocked his move to introduce a tough bill to combat corruption.

Later, he sent his resignation to Delhi's Lt Governor Najeeb Jung.

Earlier, speaking in the Delhi legislative assembly, he said, "I will consider myself fortunate if I have to sacrifice my post and my life to end corruption."



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AL LEADER MURDER

Key accused killed in 'shootout'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

The prime accused in Awami League leader Chaitanya Kumar Mondol murder case was killed in a "gunfight" with the Rapid Action Battalion in Abhaynagar upazila of Jessore early yesterday.

Mesbah-ur-Rahman, 40, chief of a criminal gang locally known as Mesbah Bahini, allegedly had ties with the BNP and Jamaat-Shibir.

A group of miscreants led by Mesbah reportedly hacked and burnt Chaitanya Kumar Mondol, a retired army personnel and youth and sports secretary of Magura ward AL, to death inside the latter's drugstore in Magura bazaar in Abhaynagar on January 26.

Two days into the homicide, Mesbah's second-in-command Rabiul Islam,

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LAST-BALL BLUES ... A dejected Bangladesh side make their way out of the field after losing the second and final T20I by three wickets against Sri Lanka at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday. Story on page 14.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

UPAZILA ELECTIONS

AL now soft on rebels

BNP still trying to get rid of them

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and PANKAJ KARMAKAR

Unlike Khaleda Zia of BNP, Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina went soft on rebel candidates in the upazila elections, overturning her party colleagues' decision to oust them from the party.

Apparently failing to persuade rebel candidates to quit fighting with each other in the electoral race and make the party's candidates weak against the BNP-backed rivals, two organising secretaries of Awami League on Wednesday recommended expelling the rebels, insiders said.

However, Hasina did not. Instead, she asked them to convince the rebels to work for the party-backed candidates.

The insiders said the central working committee of the party, the highest decision-making body of Awami League, even pulled rank on grassroots units and overruled their decision to expel rebels.

It is the central working committee that has the authority to expel leaders from the party.

In the BNP camp the situation is different. Seven BNP grassroots leaders in Bakerganj upazila of Barisal, Maheshkhali of Cox's Bazar, Singair of Manikganj and Senbagh of Noakhali had been ousted for competing against party colleagues.

The party high-command, however, withdrew the

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