



## River connectivity by this year

Dhaka, Delhi yet to fix fees and charges

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh may provide river transit to India on a limited scale this year after the two sides fix transit fees and charges.

A joint committee comprising officials of both countries would be formed soon to make recommendations for the fees and charges within two months, said shipping ministry officials.

Once those are settled, the facility might be given to India on a limited scale, they said.

"It will require large-scale dredging of river routes if India is to be provided with full-fledged river transit facility," said one of the officials on condition of anonymity.

At a meeting in New Delhi in April, shipping ministry officials of the two countries agreed to make mutually beneficial arrangements for the use of waterways, roads and railways for bilateral trade and passage of goods between two places in one country through the territory of the other.

India would pay Bangladesh transit fees, while Nepal and Bhutan would pay fees to both Bangladesh and India, said the officials of Bangladesh shipping ministry.

At present, India pays Bangladesh Tk 10 crore annually for using the latter's waterways.

Under the new arrangement, fees and charges would be set in accordance with the policy of the World Trade Organisation.

A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been drafted under the Extension of Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT) signed during the recent Dhaka visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The SOP contains details of the transit routes, ports of call and other related issues.

Dhaka, however, will have to sign a separate deal with Delhi for using India's river routes to move goods to Nepal and Bhutan.

Twelve ports, six each in Bangladesh and India, have been proposed as ports of call where ships would load or unload cargos and undergo repairs.

Those are Mongla, Khulna, Sirajganj, Narayanganj, Pangaon and Ashuganj in Bangladesh, and Kolkata, Haldia, Karimganj, Pandu, Silghat and Farakka or Bangle in India.

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## No condition for \$2b new Indian credit

PM tells Sangsad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday told parliament that there were no terms and conditions in spending \$2 billion Indian credit and the government would use the amount independently.

"Bangladesh is an independent country. We do not take any assistance from any country with conditions. There is no condition in accepting the credit from India," she said in reply to lawmakers' queries.

"We will be able to spend the money on our own, considering our own necessity," she added.

Hasina also informed the House that her government would identify the sectors and projects, which will be implemented with the Indian credit.

"Earlier we got \$1 billion from India which was spent in developing infrastructure and other development projects," she said.

Referring to the recently

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## HUMAN TRAFFICKING BY SEA

# Women are sexually abused all the way

SHAMIM ASHRAF, back from Thailand

Afia (not her real name) was not accompanied by any of her family members, but she showed no signs of jitters. While many in the vessel turned pale in panic due to want of food and water in the perilous sea, the beautiful young girl held her nerves.

Everything had apparently been neatly arranged, the 18-year-old thought. Her would-be-groom had already paid the brokers a hefty sum

of money and was waiting near the Thai-Malaysia borders to greet her.

Turning her head as if to get a glimpse of the Myanmar coastline she left behind 10 days ago, Afia heaved a sigh of relief: the miseries back home wouldn't touch her anymore. Just a few days and she would get married in Malaysia!

But the situation on the other side - at a jungle camp in Sadao district of bordering Thai province of Songkhla where her fiancé went to receive her --

was beyond her imagination. As soon as he reached there from Malaysia, guards of the camp confined him to a cage at gunpoint.

Without allowing Afia, who landed nearby two days later, to see her would-be-groom, the traffickers herded her along with a few hundred others towards a large cage made of wood and barbed-wire and covered with thin plastic sheet.

A few days later, one of the guards

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In this picture taken on May 22, 2015, Rohingya women and children wait to register in a confinement area for migrants at Bayeun of Aceh, after more than 400 Rohingya migrants were rescued by Indonesian fishermen on May 20.

PHOTO: AFP

## Repatriated migrants sent home

Two Rohingyas identified, arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

As many as 144 human trafficking victims headed for home yesterday, two days after they were repatriated from Myanmar.

The Cox's Bazar district administration finished the process of sending the victims home after completing legal formalities. By 6:30pm, all the 144 left the temporary camp at Cox's Bazar Cultural Centre.

The Myanmar Border Guard Police on Monday handed over 150 trafficking victims, preliminarily identified as Bangladeshis, to Border Guard Bangladesh. Of them, 55 are from Narsingdi. They were rescued by Myanmar navy on May 21 while being trafficked to Malaysia on a boat.

However, detectives identified two of the 150 victims as Rohingyas from Myanmar. They are Hamid Hossain, 26, and Md Idris, 19.

Hamid is a refugee registered at Kutupalang Rohingya refugee camp in Ukhaia upazila of Cox's Bazar. Hailing from Maungdaw of Myanmar, Idris had entered Bangladesh illegally several years ago and had been staying here ever since, said police.

Law enforcers detained 25-year-old Saker Ullah, suspecting him to be a Rohingya. "We will interrogate him further," said Tofail Ahmed, additional superintendent of police in Cox's Bazar.

The Detective Branch of police also arrested three others from the 150. One of them is suspected trafficker Uzzal Hossain.

The two others are Shafiu Islam of Kutubdia in Cox's Bazar and Saddam Hossain of Jessore. They are fugitive convicts in separate cases.

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## Gen Belal new army chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lieutenant General Abu Belal Muhammad Shafiu Huq has been named the new chief of Bangladesh Army.

He will take the new office from June 25 afternoon, said a gazette notification of the defence

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## SME loan for hermaphrodites, ethnic groups

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Entrepreneurs belonging to third gender, who are often looked down upon, will get bank loans from now on under the central bank's financial inclusion drive.

Bangladesh Bank has directed all banks to extend credit facility to entrepreneurs who are classed as hijras or hermaphrodites under the small and medium enterprise category of customers.

The central bank issued a circular in this regard on Tuesday.

Third gender and third sex is the concept that individuals are categorised, by their will or by social consensus, as neither man nor woman.

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## Politics changes for ruling AL

Friendly opposition in JS, none on streets

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The ruling Awami League seems to have become dependent on the strategy of its main opponent, the BNP, to carry out its own political activities.

When the BNP had been enforcing a blockade and frequent hartals from January to March to cripple the Sheikh Hasina-led government, the AL was active and carried out programmes to counter the rival's street agitation.

But the AL found its programmes redundant as soon as the rival BNP postponed its agitation at the end of March and stepped into the battle of ballots in the mayoral polls.

The change in BNP's strategy also changed the AL's course of actions. The ruling party then focused on the April 29 city polls to ensure victory for its mayoral candidates.

After the city polls, the BNP, which has become almost dysfunctional due to its organisational weakness, could not come up with any fresh agitation programme.

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অবিরাম সেবার অঙ্গীকার ও দরদী সমাজ গঠনের প্রত্যয় নিয়ে তৈরি পোশাক শিল্পে সমৃদ্ধ নগরী সাভারের আশুলিয়ায়

সোস্যাল ইসলামী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড এর

১০৬তম শাখার  
শুভ উদ্বোধন

১১ জুন ২০১৫

আশুলিয়া শাখা  
বগাবাড়ী বাজার, বাইপাইল, আশুলিয়া

শীঘ্রই শুভ উদ্বোধন  
কুষ্টিয়া শাখা, কুষ্টিয়া



১০৭তম শাখার  
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আত্মরিয়া বাজার শাখা  
শরীয়তপুর  
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