

Wrong message to foreign investors

FROM PAGE 1
minister asked the officials concerned to reclaim all but 500 acres of land as the rest has remained unused.

Senior officials of the KEPZ said they knew nothing about the meeting, as no correspondence was made with them about the decision.

In 2012, the 17th meeting of the board of governors of the private EPZ cell under the Prime Minister's Office decided that the deed of transfer for 500 acres of land would be executed initially, and the remaining land would be handed over later, depending on how well those 500 acres were utilised.

It prompted the KEPZ to file a writ with the High Court in July 2013, challenging the meeting's decision. The court stayed the execution of the decision and the issue is still pending with the High Court. Later, in May this year, the board of governors decided that the decision would be taken after the disposal of the writ.

Under the circumstances, Finance Minister AMA Muhith said in September last year that the government would take back 2,000 acres of land as Youngone had failed to use the allocated land.

Youngone was allocated about 2,500 acres of land after the deputy commissioner of Chittagong in 1999 received full payment for the land acquired for the industrial estate.

But the deed of transfer was not executed by successive governments although the issue is crucial to bringing investors to the KEPZ, said a senior official of the zone.

The Korea-based company even paid 50% more than the price for the KEPZ land, he added.

Although the government is saying that the KEPZ has not been able to utilise more than 500 acres of the allocated land, Youngone has legal obligations that it cannot use more than 1,200 acres, as it has to set aside 52 percent of the land for plantation,

open areas and water bodies.

It can only use up to 48 percent of the land for factories, utilities, roads, accommodation, hospital, schools and other facilities.

The KEPZ has developed 1,165 acres of land so far, building 24 kilometres of roads and constructing 22 factory buildings. The development work of the zone is scheduled to be completed by 2019, according to Jahangir Saadat, president of the KEPZ.

Youngone, a South Korean company engaged in the manufacture and distribution of sportswear and shoes, and other Korean companies plan to invest \$1.2 billion in the zone by 2020, setting up 150 factories in which 100,000 people could be employed directly.

Youngone has so far invested \$150 million, developing infrastructures and setting up 22 factories despite non-cooperation from the government. It plans to raise the investment to \$250 million by 2016.

Of the 22 factories, seven are running commercial operations, creating 11,000 jobs for local Bangladeshis. The rest of the factories would be ready by 2016, creating jobs for 43,000 more workers.

Zahid Hossain, lead economist of the World Bank in Dhaka, said this would give a wrong signal to foreign investors if the government took this unilateral decision on reclaiming the land. "It will set a bad precedent. The issue should be sorted out through a bilateral discussion," he said.

He also said the government was setting up a number of special economic zones to woo foreign investors. "The foreign investors would seek guarantee that these zones will not be taken back in the future," Zahid said.

Over the years, several foreign investors such as LG and Samsung contacted the KEPZ authorities to get plots, but had to back out for land-related complications.

Samsung was interested in setting

up its factory at the KEPZ by investing funds to the tune of \$5 billion to manufacture mobile handsets, but it could not proceed for these land issues, said Lee Yun-young, South Korean ambassador, in December last year.

Putin says Russia weathering sanctions, lectures West

REUTERS, St Petersburg

President Vladimir Putin boasted on Friday that Russia had found the "inner strength" to prevent sanctions causing a deep economic crisis, and told the West to stop using "the language of ultimatums."

Investment in Russia has slowed to a trickle, capital flight has risen and the economy has been sliding into recession since oil prices tumbled last year and the West imposed economic sanctions on Moscow over the Ukraine crisis.

But in a 29-minute speech to a business forum and a question-and-answer session that lasted more than an hour, Putin ignored calls by many investors to unveil new plans to end the downturn.

Instead, he warned the West not to meddle in Moscow's affairs and shifted blame for the conflict in Ukraine onto the West, primarily the United States.

"I would like to point out that at the end of last year we were warned - and you know this well - that there would be a deep crisis," Putin said in the speech in the former imperial capital of St Petersburg.

"It has not happened. We have stabilised the situation ... mainly because the Russian economy piled up a sufficient supply of inner strength," he told an audience including rows of foreign and Russian businessmen and much of the Russian government.

Germany is turning 62 military bases into wildlife sanctuaries

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

They were once military bases at the centre of a 50-year war between the world's two superpowers. They will soon become a haven for rare birds and other animals.

The German government has announced plans to convert 62 disused military bases just west of the Iron Curtain into nature reserves for eagles, woodpeckers, bats, and beetles.

Environment Minister Barbara Hendricks said: "We are seizing a historic opportunity with this conversion — many areas that were once no-go zones are no longer needed for military purposes."

Together the bases are 31,000 hectares — that's equivalent to 40,000 football pitches. The conversion will see Germany's total area of protected wildlife increase by a quarter.

After toying with the idea of selling the land off as real estate, the government opted instead to make a grand environmental gesture.

It will become another addition to what is now known as the European Green Belt.

A spokesperson from The European Green Belt told The Independent: "In the remoteness of the inhuman border fortifications of the Iron Curtain nature was able to develop nearly undisturbed."

"Today the European Green Belt is an ecological network and memorial landscape running from the Barents to the Black Sea."

Anxious time

FROM PAGE 16
freed after a flag meeting between the two border forces.

An official at the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) headquarters in Dhaka said there was no significant development regarding Razzak's return as of yesterday evening.

The talks were on, said the official, wishing not to be named.

State Minister for Home Affairs Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday told BBC Bangla Service, "This much time was never taken in the past ... Nevertheless, they [BGP] did not say anything negative so far. They have always been saying that they would release him."

The BGP opened fire on a BGB patrol boat near the Naf river in the early hours of Wednesday. A BGB sepoy, Biplob Kumar, suffered bullet wounds while Razzak was taken by the BGB men.

Media published photos of a handcuffed Razzak. Another photo showed bloodstains on his nose.

The photos stirred an outcry. Allegations have been raised that the Myanmar forces apparently mistreated the BGB personnel, the BBC Bangla Service reported.

Asked whether such an incident was a sign of a declining diplomatic relations, minister Kamal told the BBC Bangla Service, "There was no deterioration in our relationship. We have a healthy relationship."

Razzak is the son of Tofazzal Hossain of Baliabari village in Singra upazila of Natore.

Tofazzal told our Natore correspondent that he wanted to know how his son was in Myanmar but no one could provide him with concrete information.

"The BGB officials are saying that he is well and safe in Myanmar. But we are seeing that BGB men tortured him," he said, referring to the photos.

He alleged that the BGB and the government were not doing enough for his son's return.

Man kills

FROM PAGE 16
The deceased was Sumon's son Sunny Hebram, mother-in-law Sandhya Rani Hasda, 45, sister-in-law Tereja Mardi, 23, and uncle-in-law Markel Mardi, 50.

Sumon's wife Silvia Hasda, 30, received injuries and was undergoing treatment at Joypurhat Modern Hospital. The couple's two other younger children were at their grandfather's house at a neighbouring village when the incident took place, said Abu Hena Mustafa Kamal, officer-in-charge of Panchbibi Police Station.

A farm labourer by profession, Sumon had been staying at his parents-in-law's house at Bhimpur Adivasi Palli since he married Silvia seven years ago.

After knowing about the extramarital affair of his wife, Sumon last year asked his mother-in-law to refrain Silvia from it, but she didn't change, said Belayet Hossain, assistant superintendent of police in Joypurhat, quoting Sumon.

The indigenous couple was having a heated quarrel over the issue around 4:00am yesterday. All of a sudden, Sumon attacked the five with a machete, leaving four of them dead.

Police recovered the bodies around 7:00am and sent them to Joypurhat Modern Hospital morgue for autopsies. They also recovered a machete from the spot.

It's spreading

FROM PAGE 16
area, where the canal merges with the Karnaphuli river, layers of the oil were seen flowing into the river. According to locals, oil slicks started floating towards the river since Friday evening.

Although no dead fish was seen while travelling around 4km of the canal by boat, Gopan Jaladas, a fisherman who was catching fish in the canal, told this correspondent that he found some shrimps floating on the canal.

Three of the derailed tanker wagons plunged into the canal following the collapse of a railway bridge in Kitabchar area. Two of them sank in the canal. A third was partially submerged while a fourth one had tilted sideways.

Railway authorities had already removed the fourth wagon yesterday, railway sources said.

Oil from the three wagons might already have spilled, said a high official of the railways, seeking anonymity.

"Our first priority is to fix the line and salvage the engine," said Mazfuzur Rahman, Chittagong Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) of Railway's East Zone.

To do this, he said, two wagons (partially submerged one and the other one that tilted) had to be salvaged first and it would take at least two days to do so.

Pulling out the other two wagons would take at least five to seven days, Rahman added.

The canal flows to the Karnaphuli river, some 10 to 12km off the spot.

Railway sources said each of the wagons was carrying around 25,000

litres of furnace oil.

Three people, including the train's Loco Master Sahidullah and Assistant Loco Master Zafar, were hurt in the accident.

Movement of a pair of trains, that ply the route, remained suspended.

Meanwhile, experts apprehended that biodiversity of the area and also the Karnaphuli river would be affected seriously.

"The spread of oil will badly affect the fertility of the soil in the area," said Prof Alok Pal of Geography and Environmental Studies Department at Chittagong University.

He said the railway authorities should be more careful regarding this kind of incidents.

Halda expert Manzoorul Kibri Monzoorul Kibria, also an associate professor of Zoology department at Chittagong University, said the impact of this spill on the environment would be serious.

"From plankton to fishes -- all will be affected by this oil spillage," said Kibria.

The oil spill would affect the process of oxygen getting dissolved in the water, he said.

The accident occurred due to the negligence of the authorities concerned, said Mokbul Hossain, director of the Department of Environment (Chittagong region) while talking to reporters at the spot yesterday.

The oil slick had spread to vast areas due to tides, he said.

Legal action would be taken against those responsible for the damage of the environment, he said.

New extinction phase

FROM PAGE 16
millions of years to recover and our species itself would likely disappear early on," said the lead author, Gerardo Ceballos.

The scientists looked at historic rates of extinction for vertebrates -- animals with backbones -- by assessing fossil records.

They found that the current extinction rate was more than 100 times higher than in periods when Earth was not going through a mass extinction event.

Since 1900, the report says, more than 400 more vertebrates had disappeared.

Such a loss would normally be seen over a period of up to 10,000 years, the scientists say.

The study, published in the Science Advances journal, cites causes such as climate change, pollution and deforestation.

Given the knock-on effect of ecosystems being destroyed, the report says benefits such as pollination by bees could be lost within three human generations.

Stanford University professor Paul Ehrlich said, "There are examples of species all over the world that are essentially the walking dead."

"We are sawing off the limb that we are sitting on."

Know who they are

FROM PAGE 1
spite of its initiatives to know the names of the Bangladeshis who deposited money at different Swiss banks.

"Switzerland has become a haven for siphoning money," he said.

The lawmaker also asked the central bank to play a more effective role in this regard.

He criticised the Speaker for her "silent role" and for not issuing any rule regarding different public interest issues he had raised in parliament earlier.

"Honourable Speaker, we speak out on point of order in parliament on different national and public interest issues. You just hear our statements but do not give any ruling. As a result, nobody pays heed to it and the problems remain unresolved. Had you

issued rulings regarding the points of order, these problems would have been resolved and the nation would have been benefited," he said.

Salim added if you issue ruling, the ministries will be compelled to carry it out.

He called upon Finance Minister AMA Muhith and the Bangladesh Bank to be more active to stop money laundering.

Meanwhile, another independent lawmaker, Rustom Ali Farazi, yesterday demanded that the minister concerned give a statement in parliament regarding the government steps to bring back Bangladeshi fortune-seekers detained in different countries.

"People want to know what the government is doing to address the humanitarian issue," he said.

Comet probe Philae dials home, 'doing very well'

AFF, Paris

Europe's robot lab Philae phoned home on Friday after several days silence in its journey towards the Sun on the back of a comet and is "doing very well", the German Aerospace Center (DLR) said.

The latest contact lasted 19 minutes and is the third time that Philae has touched base with Earth since it landed on Comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko on November 12 after piggybacking on its mothership Rosetta.

The mission seeks to unlock the long-held secrets of comets -- primordial clusters of ice and dust that scientists believe may reveal how the Solar System was formed.

After landing on the comet, Philae had used its stored battery power to send home reams of data before going into standby mode.

The hope was that as the comet approaches the Sun, solar energy would recharge Philae's batteries enough for it to reboot, make contact and ultimately resume scientific work.

It finally took seven months before

Philae woke up on June 13 from hibernation and made contact with Earth for two minutes. It reported back again just two days after that first contact.

On Friday, Philae transmitted 185 data packets back to Earth between 1320 and 1339 GMT.

"Among other things, we have received updated status information," Michael Maibaum, a systems engineer at the DLR Lander Control Center in Cologne.

bKash agents

FROM PAGE 16

to Subornachar upazila by a motorcycle. When they reached near Rahmatpur around 2:00pm, some criminals stopped the motorcycle at gunpoint, said Anwar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Sudharam Model Police Station, quoting the victims.

When the two agents attempted to go, the muggers opened fire on them, leaving the two wounded. The gang then took away the money from the possession of the duo.

A case was filed.

Rajuk knew it all

FROM PAGE 16
Meanwhile, Prof Syed Fakhru Ameen, of the civil engineering department of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, leads a DSCC investigation into the incident without the endorsement of this university.

Kazi Golam Nasir, chief architect of Department of Architecture, said the authorised officer of Rajuk, who is empowered by the building law, should have first stopped the construction work and then cancelled the building approval.

The Authorised Officer AZM Shafiul Hannan told The Daily Star, "We could not take legal action against the building developer due to excessive workload." He later on said, "It was due to lack of manpower."

He said there were five building inspectors, including one chief inspector, under him but he had no idea how many under-construction buildings were there to look after at a time.

Nazrul Islam, local chief building inspector, told this correspondent, "I visited the NBL building site but do not know anything about who designed it and how the construction work was going on."

A day after the collapse, Rajuk started a flurry of activities.

It filed a case against NBL former deputy managing director Nazib Uddin Bhuiyan, Chief Executive M Salahuddin Ahmed of the construction firm MS Constructions, and the firm's project director Akhtarul Alam,

and unnamed hired technical professionals on charges of carelessness in construction.

Meanwhile, Nazib Uddin Bhuiyan had retired on March 31.

Rajuk also suspended, its officers, Shafiul and Nazrul, for negligence soon after the collapse.

Taking responsibility for safe construction work, the NBL authorities had given a written indemnity to Rajuk. This is a regular practice while taking approval for building.

But the Rajuk authorised officer was still responsible for monitoring according to building laws.

Shamim Z Bosunia, structural engineer who designed the foundation of the building, said the construction work was faulty and he had informed the NBL of the matter several times.

NBL'S SAY

Asked why they did not make the declaration of work prior to starting construction and had not ensured required safety measures, Abdul Hamid Mia, additional managing director of NBL, side-stepped the question.

Instead, he said they were waiting for the findings of the probe headed by Buet Prof Fakhru, being conducted by Dhaka South City Corporation.

Asked about their legal liability in the incident, Hamid said, "What I have said is final and I will not make any further comments."

FAKHRUL NOT ENDORSED BY

BUET

AMM Taufiqul Anwar, head of civil

engineering department of Buet, said that he, on a verbal request from the Dhaka North City Corporation immediately nominated Prof Mehedi Ahmed Ansary and Prof Eqramul Hoque as experts in the probe on behalf of Buet.

"But I have no knowledge of Prof Syed Fakhru Ameen being involved in the issue, as the university authorities did not designate him."

Mehedi and Eqramul are not working in the probe after Fakhru stepped in.

Prof Md Zoynul Abedin, former head of the civil engineering department, said for official investigation into an engineering issue, one has to ask the Buet authority for an expert. Such a request may be verbal in an emergency and made official later on.

"The Buet authority, either the department head or the vice-chancellor, is to then nominate the relevant expert to take a professional position on the issue with authority," he said, adding, "Unless endorsed officially; an expert does not have the authority to give an engineering judgment on behalf of Buet."

When called over the telephone, Fakhru on June 11 said they would let everyone know of the causes of the incident only after finishing the report. He hung up when asked whether he was endorsed by Buet.

He did not answer his phone when called several times later.

ADMISSION NOTICE

BANGLADESH UNIVERSITY OF PROFESSIONALS (BUP)

A Public University Supported by the Armed Forces

Mirpur Cantonment, Dhaka – 1216

Website: www.bup.edu.bd

ADMISSION: EVENING MBA PROGRAMME –TRIMESTER SEPTEMBER 2015

ELIGIBILITY FOR ADMISSION

- Bachelor Degree or equivalent in any field.
- Minimum 7 points calculated based on the results of past public examinations as explained in the website.
- Not more than one 3rd division/class or less than GPA/CGPA 2.5 in any public examination.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

- Taka 1000/- must be deposited at any Trust Bank Branch in "Dean, FBS, BUP" A/C number 0028-0310036572. For details see BUP Website.
- Submission of Application.** Application must be submitted online through BUP website.
- Help Desk:** A help desk will remain functional at BUP campus. Visit help desk or call 01769023090 for online application submission related information from Sunday to Thursday except government holidays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The University authority reserves the right to cancel / modify/ change any information /instructions given in this advertisement.

– Dean, FBS, BUP

ADMISSION SCHEDULE

- Online Application Submission:** 25 June'15 - 25 July'15
- Date, Time & Venue of Written Test :** 31 July'15 at 9:30 a.m. at BUP Campus, Mirpur Cantonment
- Publication of Written Test Result :** 05 August '15
- Viva-voce :** 07-10 August'15
- Publication of Final Result :** 13 August '15
- Class Commences :** 03 September'15

GD-2154