

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

43 projects to draw \$14b investment

UNB, Dhaka

Forty-three projects, now in the pipeline of Public Private Partnership (PPP) initiative, are expected to draw investments of around \$14 billion.

The information was presented at the first Board of Governors meeting of the PPP Authority at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday, with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim said the meeting reviewed the implementation and progress of PPP activities in the country for the last couple of years.

It was informed about the development of the PPP projects, selecting private partners, possible time for signing the final agreements and the probable amount of overall investment.

The final agreements on six projects have been signed while the feasibility studies for 18 projects have been completed at a cost of Tk 77 crore from the PPP technical fund.

Besides, 11 projects are at the final stage of selecting private partners while 10 others are at the stage of feasibility study.

Speaking at the meeting, the premier stressed the importance of expediting the pace of development. "We want to accelerate the pace of development in the country, but the government cannot do this alone...the PPP initiatives are also needed."

Hasina said the private sector in South Korea played a key role in its development.

She asked the authorities concerned to look for the country's benefits while moving ahead with PPP projects.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, Housing and Public Works Minister Mosharrif Hossain, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon, Railways Minister Muzibul Haque, State Minister for Finance and Planning MA Mannan and State Minister for ICT Junaid Ahmed Palak were present, among others.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina consoles the wife of ailing freedom fighter and actor Farid Ali as the PM hands over a cheque to her as financial assistance at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

MYMENSINGH GIRLS' CADET COLLEGE
5 indicted over student's death in 2005

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A Mymensingh court yesterday framed charges against five people for their alleged involvement in the killing of a student of Mymensingh Girls' Cadet College in 2005.

Judge Mohammad Amir Uddin of Mymensingh District and Sessions Judge's Court framed charges against the then adjutant Maj Nazmul Haque, the college's associate professor Abul Hossain, the then sergeant Nawsherus-Zaman, the then security guard Hena Begum, and the then deputy adjutant general Maj Monir Ahmed Chowdhury of the Army Headquarters.

Except for Maj Monir, the four other accused were present in the court yesterday.

Contacted, Wazedul Islam, a public prosecutor, said the court fixed March 24 for recording testimonies.

Sharmila Shaharin Pollen, 18, a second-year student and daughter of retired Air Force officer Abul Bashar Patwary of Chandpur, was found dead in the bathroom of her dormitory "Shanti House" on the morning of February 11, 2005.



As Pollen's roommates and classmates could not find her after breakfast, they started looking for her and found the door of a bathroom locked from the inside, police said. They knocked at the door repeatedly, but did not get any response.

Later, a maid of the hostel entered the bathroom scaling a wall and found Pollen hanging from the shower pipe, police had then said, quoting college sources.

The college authorities rushed Pollen to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in Mymensingh where doctors declared her dead.

Police recovered the body from the CMH and sent it to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) for autopsy.

According to the charge-framing order, Pollen was tortured and made unconscious with a blunt object inside the college on that day (February 11, 2005). Then she was strangled.

Before that, to kill Pollen in a planned way, all security guards, except for Hena

Begum, were locked in an office room. Then Pollen's body was hung with a scarf from a shower pipe in a bathroom to make it look like a suicide.

At a press conference at Mymensingh Press Club yesterday evening, the victim's father alleged that he was first informed by Maj Nazmul about the incident around 12:30pm that day.

Bashar said he started for Mymensingh from Dhaka and reached there around 4:00pm.

"I reached the MMCH and found Pollen's body on the hospital's corridor around 5:00pm."

He claimed that he requested the army officers to allow him to take the body to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy, but Maj Nazmul and Maj Monir did not allow it.

An unnatural death case was lodged with Kotwali Police Station on February 11, 2005.

"I tried to file a murder case with Kotwali Police Station but police did not accept it."

On February 19, 2005, Bashar lodged a case with Cognisance Court No-1. The court ordered the police to investigate the incident. Police submitted a final report terming the incident a "suicide", he said.

"I did not accept the findings of the police report and the court directed the CID [Criminal Investigation Department] to investigate the incident. But the CID too submitted a report similar to the one submitted by the police."

Later, Bashar sought a judicial enquiry with the same court and the court ordered judicial magistrate Jahangir Hossain to probe. After Jahangir's transfer, senior judicial magistrate Al Amin continued the investigation and submitted a report to the court on May 22, 2013, accusing the five people.

The court accepted the judicial enquiry report in 2013. The hearing on charge framing was held on January 14, 2016.

"I want justice for the killing of my daughter," said the bereaved father.

Lawyers Nurul Haque, Biswanath Pal, Abdus Sattar pleaded for the plaintiff, while AHM Khalequzzaman stood for the accused.

BNP gets venue for council

Plans to hold it in capital's IEB on March 19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP has announced that it would hold its 6th national council scheduled for March 19 at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB).

"The authorities of the engineers' institute gave us a written permission last night," said Rizvi Ahmed, joint secretary general of the party, at a press briefing at its Nayapaltn head office yesterday.

He also said they had approached the Public Works Department (PWD) to use Suhrawardy Udyan for the council but changed their mind later.

"We won't go to Suhrawardy Udyan. Now, we will start our preparations for holding the council at the engineers' institute."

Asked, the BNP leader told The Daily Star that police permission was not required for the council since it would be an indoor programme.

He, however, said they would inform the law enforcement agency about it. "If we are told to take police permission, we will talk to the Dhaka Metropolitan Police [DMP]."

Contacted, police said the BNP would have to take their permission for using loud speakers in any rally as well as for any gathering at the IEB.

"It's a matter of public security," said Shibli Noman, assistant commissioner of the DMP (Ramna zone).

The BNP had considered holding the triennial national council in Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC), IEB, Suhrawardy Udyan, and Bashundhara Convention Center in Dhaka.

The party held its previous council at BICC in 2009.

When the party approached the PWD for Suhrawardy Udyan, the department asked it to take police permission first.

Later, the BNP selected the IEB as the council venue as the party high-ups preferred to organise the programme in an auditorium, said the party insiders.

Meanwhile, several BNP leaders, including chiefs of the sub-committees of the councils, told The Daily Star that they were happy that they had got a venue at last.

They, however, said they would not be able to bring in supporters as much as they would like to have had due to space constraint at the IEB.

Drug-carrying

FROM PAGE 1 went to the spot and signalled the truck to stop, but the driver ignored their signal.

Later, the police officials chased the truck.

The truck slowed down, allowed to let the motorbike go in front of it and then ran over Atau and Sadekul near Palli Bidyut office and fled. The policemen were killed on the spot, said the OC.

On information, police recovered the bodies and sent those to Chapainawabganj Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsies.

Police arrested trucker Sirajul Islam, 38, from Bholahat upazila around 10:30am.

They also seized the truck and recovered 1,450 bottles of illegal phenidyl syrup from the vehicle, the OC added.

Why such cruelty

FROM PAGE 1 responsibilities, he says.

"It is creating restlessness among us and damaging our social relations."

Children are often becoming victims of these imbalanced changes in the society, Emranul adds.

Mohit Kamal, head of psychotherapy at National Institute of Mental Health, believes social surroundings and television programmes too have a part in these negative changes.

"Thanks to wealth shown on television shows or the economic status of the next-door neighbours, people often find their financial reality failing to meet their unrealistic expectations. This ultimately leads them to depression."

Citing the National Survey on Mental Health 2006, he says 4.6 percent of the country's people were depressed. "The number must have increased by now."

The depressed people tend to think negatively and, after a certain period of time, all of their decisions and thoughts get affected by the depression, often resulting in violent outburst, he adds.

Prof Mehtab Khanam of Educational and Counselling Psychology at Dhaka University says unhappy conjugal life often leads to depression and the children in many cases fall victim to their parents' mental stress.

"Neither the state nor the society gives much importance to the mental health issue," she says, stressing the need for preventive measures to tackle such problems.

Nehal Karim, a professor of sociology at the same university, thinks certain TV programmes should be blamed for the spread of violence in the society.

"It seems all we watch on TV are quarrels and fights within families. Unfortunately, such programmes are popular among the audience."

While it may not be possible to change these things with laws, different institutions, especially the government agencies concerned, should try to promote positive changes, he adds.

Children are always in a vulnerable situation in the society because of their age, observes Laila Khondokar, director of Child Protection of Save the Children.

"Physically they are weaker than the adults and are dependent on them... You would think twice before hitting an adult but you can get away with doing that to a child."

Parents often vent the stress they face at work or in everyday life on their children, which is not right, she says.

"The main problem is that we often see the children as our property, not as human beings," Laila adds.

A claim hard to believe

FROM PAGE 1 was in debt.

Rab officials support this, saying it was a "solvent family living in peace".

Nusrat Aman Aroni, 14, and her six-year-old brother Alvi Aman were found unconscious at their apartment on Monday afternoon. They were declared dead at Dhaka Medical College Hospital that evening.

It was initially believed that they died from food poisoning before autopsies suggested they might have been murdered. There were bruises on their bodies.

On Wednesday, Rab brought the children's parents and an aunt from their hometown in Jamalpur for quizzing.

It had also picked up five people, including relatives, security guards and the female house tutor, for interrogation.

At the press briefing, Commander Mufti said the two kids had two house tutors. On that day, after the house tutor left, Jasmine asked her daughter to go to the bedroom and take rest. Alvi was already sleeping there.

There was a scuffle during the strangulation and at one point, both mother and daughter fell on the floor, the Rab official claimed.

Sure about Nusrat's death, she killed Alvi in sleep, using the same scarf, he added.

To cover it up, she made up the food-poisoning story and called her husband over the phone, saying the children were sick. She also called her sister, he said.

During primary interrogation, the mother said she was anxious about her children's education. However, she "behaved normally" at the time of quizzing.

Jasmine has a master's in management and taught in a college from 2005-2007. She was serious about her kids' education, Mufti said.

Additional Superintendent of Police Mostaque Ahmed of Rab-3 claimed to have learned that the mother attempted to commit suicide a couple of times in the past. But he did not say why.

RELATIVES, EXPERTS

DUMFOUNDED

Relatives in Jamalpur, where the couple is from, said they did not believe the Rab version of the incident. Jasmine's mother said she was unaware that her daughter ever had any mental disturbance.

She said Jasmine and Amanullah got married in 2002. Jasmine was a teacher in a Jamalpur college for a couple of years, before moving to Dhaka.

Contacted, Prof Nehal Karim, who teaches sociology at Dhaka University, said, "The way I have watched and followed the news since yesterday morning, it seems highly improbable to me that this woman killed her own children without any other motives."

We can stun

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A confident Taskin believes the hosts have the capability to stun India in the final on Sunday.

"Look we have been preparing for the Asia Cup from two months before the start of the tournament and we played the last two matches quite well. All these aspects have increased our confidence."

"We are growing in strength with each game. If we can play our best, then I am sure it will be a good final for us," said Taskin.

Since Bangladesh have reached the final of the Asia Cup, set to take place on March 6, they will only get a day's rest in Dharamsala before they face the Netherlands for their first World Twenty20 encounter on March 9.

Some believe that it could prove to be a hindrance to Bangladesh's World Cup campaign, considering that they are just getting a day to adjust to the conditions there. Taskin though, wasn't concerned about the issue.

"Conditions are an important factor in cricket, no doubt. But the confidence that we have attained after winning these matches will help us a lot and is more important. I believe that if we can execute properly, then we will be able to do well in any condition," he said.

SEDITION CASE

Khaleda asked to appear in court April 10

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday asked BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to appear before it on April 10 in a sedition case filed against her over her remarks on the number of Liberation War martyrs.

Metropolitan Magistrate Jakir Hossain Tipu passed the order granting a time petition by her.

In the plea, Khaleda's lawyer Sanaullah Miah said the BNP chief could not turn up for a court appearance yesterday due to her illness and she would come to the court at the next date of the hearing, if she was allowed.

The complainant appealed to the court to issue an arrest warrant for Khaleda for her absence despite being summoned on January 25 to appear before it yesterday.

However, the court did not pass any order on that.

The sedition case was filed on January 25 by Momtaz Uddin Ahmad Mehedi, a Supreme Court lawyer and member of Awami League's central committee, with the home ministry's approval.

In it, he alleged that Khaleda at a December 21 programme last year said, "There are controversies over exactly how many were martyred in the Liberation War. There are also many books and documents on the controversies."

Khaleda's statements drew widespread flak and sparked protest among pro-liberation quarters.

ZIA CHARITABLE CASE

A Dhaka court yesterday adjourned till March 10 the hearing on the Zia Charitable Trust graft case filed against Khaleda Zia and three others.

Meanwhile, lawyers for another accused, Monirul Islam Khan, cross-examined a witness, ACC Deputy Director Harunur Rashid and also the investigation officer in the case, for over three hours.

Later, Judge Abu Ahmed Jomadar of the Special Judge Court -3 fixed March 10 for next hearing.

Robbers

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were skeptical about the role of the seven staff who included two gunmen, as they failed to resist the attack.

Police picked up all of them for interrogation to know why the gunmen had not fired at the attackers who came to the spot in a pick-up without mask to hide their identities.

Police also suspected that the robbers had been following the staff of the security company for a few days, the OC said, adding that before the robbery, the company staff loaded 18 other ATMs in several DBBL booths in Gazipur.

Law enforcers got video footage from a CCTV camera inside the booth and were trying to identify the criminals, Abdul said.

Abul Kashem Mohammad Shirin, deputy managing director of DBBL, confirmed the incident and said the company was tasked with carrying the bank's money to load ATMs regularly.

Lt. Col (ret'd) Abedin, chief operator of the security company, filed a case with Kaliakoir Police Station in connection with the incident, the OC said.

Istanbul police kill two female leftist militants in standoff

AFP, Istanbul

Turkish police killed two female leftist militants who hurled grenades and opened fire at an Istanbul police station yesterday, officials said.

The two women -- members of the outlawed ultra-leftist Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C) -- had taken refuge in an apartment after their attack in the Bayrampasa district.

Police then launched an assault on the apartment, and the two were "neutralised", Istanbul governor Vasip Sahin was quoted as saying by the official Anatolia news agency. Two police officers were slightly wounded.

The women were named as Cigdem Yaksi and Berna Yilmaz, both members of the DHKP-C and aged 27, Anatolia said. It said Yilmaz had previously been jailed after a protest against President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in 2010 while he was still premier.

In a statement on its website and social media channels, the DHKP-C claimed the attack and acknowledged the death of the pair, describing the women as "warriors for justice".

The two women had thrown several grenades then opened fire at the riot police headquarters and also attacked a passing police bus.

Security footage broadcast on television showed them brandishing weapons they pulled out of their handbags.

Officers returned fire, injuring one of the attackers before they fled to the nearby building.

Turkey has been on a state of alert for months since a series of deadly attacks on its soil.

Last month, 29 people were killed in a car bombing that targeted a military convoy in Ankara, which was claimed by the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK), who have been linked to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).