

PM opens today 8-lane part of highway to Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is set to inaugurate the country's first eight-lane highway corridor and construction of the first four-lane expressway today.

Through video conferencing, the PM will open these projects at 10:30am from the Gono Bhaban.

The Road Transport and Highways Division has already completed construction of the 7.2 kilometres stretch of the eight-lane highway termed "enter and exit corridor". The corridor has been built between the Mayor Hanif Flyover and Shimrail intersection on the Jatrabari-Kanchpur national highway near the capital.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said this eight-lane highway would help reduce traffic congestion when vehicles enter and exit the capital, using the Jatrabari-Kanchpur highway.

He said a huge number of vehicles from two major cities -- Chittagong and Sylhet -- use this highway and traffic congestion on this highway will reduce after the inauguration of the eight-lane portion. At the same time, this road will contribute to the socioeconomic development of the area, added the minister.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6



The country's first eight-lane highway corridor, from Jatrabari to Shimrail, which Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate today. The prime minister will also open the construction of the country's first four-lane expressway today. The photo was taken at Shonir Akhra in the capital yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Giant rats helping

FROM PAGE 16

Yet 83,000 landmines have been neutralised in Africa and Asia thanks to the rodents, APOPO says, saving countless lives where explosives still maim and kill up to 20,000 people -- many of them children -- each year.

Eyebrows were raised when the group -- whose acronym stands for Anti-Personnel Landmines Detection Product Development -- branched out in 2007 to use rats for TB detection, under contracts with local authorities.

Today, more than 29 hospitals in Dar es Salaam and Morogoro send the Morogoro lab sputum samples. Another dozen clinics in the Mozambique capital Maputo send samples to an APOPO centre opened in that country in 2013.

The NGO says it has detected 10,000 missed TB cases, identified by workers like Oprah and Violet, whiskers bristling as they move along a row of test tubes.

"The big advantage is how quick the rats are. They can go through 100 samples in about 20 minutes, and this is what a lab technician will take four days to do," said Cox.

During TB detection, rats are presented with a mix of negative and positive samples, the latter decontaminated for safety "but the smell remains", said training director Haruni Ramadhan.

When a rat identifies a "true" positive, it is rewarded with a banana-peanut butter mixture. "We can only reward the rat if we are certain it is right," Ramadhan said.

India PM accuses Pakistan over Kashmir violence

AFP, New Delhi

India's prime minister yesterday accused Pakistan of fomenting trouble in the Kashmir valley, claiming there was enough evidence to prove it was fuelling unrest in the region.

Narendra Modi also promised to look into the grievances of those living there in a statement issued after meeting with national political parties to find ways of ending the ongoing violence in the troubled state.

"The root cause of unrest in Kashmir is cross-border terrorism which is being encouraged by our

neighbouring country," the right-wing Hindu nationalist premier said.

"Since the time terrorism has started in Kashmir... so many sophisticated weapons have been seized by our security forces and so many foreign terrorists gunned down... Pakistan can speak a million lies but the world will not accept these."

Indian-administered Kashmir has been under a curfew since protests broke out over the death last month of a popular young rebel leader -- Burhan Wani -- in a gunfight with security forces.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

3 'criminals' killed in 'shootouts'

FROM PAGE 1

Three Rab men suffered injuries during the incident, Jahangir said, adding that a revolver, a magazine, yaba tablets and two mobile phones were recovered from the spot.

Delwar's wife Rozina told The Daily Star that her husband's name is Liton Miah, 26, and he was a local drug peddler. But he never had any arms in his possession, she claimed.

Someone called her husband and took him away from Chittagong Road area on Thursday evening and since then, he was missing, she added.

Delwar's body was sent to Sir Salimullah Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

JHENIDAH

An alleged robber was killed in a "gunfight" with Rab members at Falsi Battala in Jhenidah's Harinakundo upazila in the early hours yesterday.

The deceased is Shahidul Islam

Pancha, 42, of Pardakhalpur village in the upazila.

Jhenidah Rab-6 Commander Monir Ahmed said a Rab patrol team had gone to Falsi Battala area after being informed that a gang of robbers was planning to commit a robbery there.

As the Rab team reached the area, the robbers opened fire, prompting the elite force members to retaliate.

Shahidul was caught in the line of fire and died on the spot. The other robbers, however, managed to flee.

A firearm and two bullets were recovered from the spot. Two Rab men also suffered injuries during the incident, the commander said.

KHULNA

Anarul Sana, an alleged robber, was killed in Koyra upazila in a "gunfight" with police early yesterday.

He stood accused in 10 cases, including robbery, said police.

Anarul was arrested from Koyra

Bazar area around 2:35pm on Thursday, said Sheikh Shamsheer Ali, officer-in-charge of Koyra Police Station.

Later, based on information he provided during questioning, police took him along with them on a raid in Kharkharia river area inside the Sundarbans to recover firearms, the OC said.

As soon as law enforcers reached there, Anarul's cohorts opened fire, triggering a gunfight that left Anarul and three policemen injured, he said.

Anarul was taken to Koyra Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared him dead, Shamsheer added.

The injured police members were undergoing treatment at the hospital.

A locally-made firearm and four sharp weapons were recovered from the spot.

[Our Jhenidah correspondent and a correspondent in Khulna contributed to the report.]

Payra seaport

FROM PAGE 16

be sold to other construction firms, said Jalal Uddin, proprietor of Jalal Uddin Traders.

Gulf Orient Seaways Ltd is the first shipping agent of the vessel.

The Payra seaport is on the west bank of Ramnabad channel in Kalapara upazila of Patuakhali.

The PM opened its work on November 19, 2013. The House passed the Payra Port Authority Act soon after.

Rezaul Kabir, secretary of the PPA, said the port would be fully ready by 2018.

Some offices, like the customs office, had primarily been set up so that the port could commence operations at least on a limited scale, he said.

"We already surveyed various naval routes and most routes were found to be 7 to 15 metres deep," the PPA acting chairman said.

At least 205-metre-long ships could be anchored directly, while only 186-metre-long ships could be anchored at Chittagong port, PPA officials said.



Even a day ago, garbage scattered around the designated dumping spot, taking over a considerable portion of the road in capital's Khamarbari area. But the Dhaka North City Corporation turned the place into a neat and tidy one in a prompt cleaning operation after a photo, right, was published in this newspaper yesterday.



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Militancy saw sharp rise since last year

FROM PAGE 1

on the ground floor of the Hall Building-2 at the Gazipur court and detonated the bomb strapped to his body. The bombing was apparently a part of JMB's attack on the judiciary.

That year, as many as 1,148 persons were accused in terror cases, according to a new database prepared by the police headquarters.

In the four years following 2005, there was sharp decline in the number of accused in terror cases -- with 162 accused in 2006; 174 in 2007; 87 in 2008 and 221 in 2009.

From 2010, the number of accused in militancy cases started to rise although different law enforcing agencies had claimed massive success in curbing militancy.

The yearly record shows the number of accused in cases over terrorism was 328 in 2010; 275 in 2011; 269 in 2012; 161 in 2013 and 278 in 2014, according to the database.

Launched on Tuesday, the database came in the wake of deadly terror attacks at a Gulshan café and near the historic Sholokia Eidgah in July and the prime minister's apprehension of more such incidents.

It contains names of 4,129 convicted, charge-sheeted and suspected

militants.

Monirul Islam, chief of Counterterrorism and Transnational Crime Unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said, "The number of arrest is increasing after a faction of JMB has become active. Besides, there has been a rise in militancy globally."

Some operatives broke away from the JMB led by its arrested chief Mawlana Saidur Rahman and formed "New JMB", law enforcers say.

Inspired by the ideology of Islamic State, the JMB offshoot has carried out targeted killings in recent years. Its targets include Hindus, Christians, Buddhists or people from Baha'i faith, spiritual leaders, members of Shia sect, university teachers and religious converts and foreigners.

Ansar Al Islam, previously called Ansarullah Bangla Team, mostly targets secularist writers or bloggers and gay rights activists, investigators say.

Both the new radical groups have built an extensive network that went relatively unnoticed until late last year.

A US report in early June said although the number of terrorist attacks around the world declined last year, terror incidents went up

significantly in Bangladesh.

"In 2015, Bangladesh experienced an increase in terrorist attacks ... and for the first time, transnational groups have claimed responsibility for these attacks," according to US Country Report on Terrorism 2015.

DATABASE ON MILITANTS

The police headquarters for the first time prepared such a database and shared it with different law enforcement and intelligence units to go all out against militants.

Officials who prepared the database said around 1,500 of the 4,129 on the list are now in jail, while the rest are either fugitive or out of prisons on bail.

Several suspects may have figured more than once as the list is a compilation of names that came up in 58 confessional statements given by as many accused in militancy cases in the last two decades and statements given by arrestees during interrogations in TFI (Task Force for Interrogation) cell, the officials added.

"We also included names that came up in the lists of militants prepared by different police and intelligence units," said a top official at the police headquarters, wishing not to be named.

Apart from leaders and workers of banned militant outfits, members of 10 other organisations that are suspected to have militant links and under watch of law enforcers have been listed in the database, he added.

JMB TOPS LIST

Of the 4,129 named in the database, 2,349 belong to JMB, 1,010 to Hizb-ut-Towhid and 260 to Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami, Bangladesh (Huji-B).

It contains names of 120 persons from Allahar Dal, eight from Al Mujahideen of Bangladesh, 20 from Ansar Al Islam, 135 from Ansarullah Bangla Team, 36 from Hamza Brigade and 71 from Hizb-ut-Tahrir.

Besides, 41 are involved with Jamaat-Shibir, five with Jama'atul Arakan, three from Lashkar-e-Taiba, 11 with Shahdat-e-Al-Hiqma, 22 from Kalemardaw, one each from Jadid al-Qaeda and Jaish-e-Mohammed. The rest 36 are involved with different other groups.

Jama'atul Arakan, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Jaish-e-Mohammed are respectively based in Myanmar's Arakan, India and Pakistan.

Jadid al-Qaeda, Shahadat-e-Al-Hikma and Kalemardaw are little known as their operations have not

been reported for a long time.

Jadid al-Qaeda came under police radar first when it detonated several bombs at three railway stations in Dhaka's Kamalapur, Chittagong and Sylhet in May 2007.

However, its name didn't come up in connection with any other activities after that year.

HIGHEST FROM DMP AREA

In the database, 1,345 convicted and suspected militants are from the DMP area and 549 from Rajshahi Range.

Dhaka Range has the third highest number with 511. Rangpur Range is fourth with 357 and Chittagong Range is the fifth with 285.

The northern region, under which Rajshahi and Rangpur ranges are, has all along been considered a hotbed of JMB.

Recently, at the quarterly crime conference, the SPs and police chiefs of metropolitan cities and ranges were handed over CDs containing names of suspected and convicted militants from their areas.

"We hope this comprehensive database that we have prepared for the first time will help fight militants," said a top official wishing anonymity.

Banker held on Tk 4.5cr graft charge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) on Thursday arrested a senior bank official in connection with misappropriation of Tk 4.5 crore of the state-run bank by submitting false documents.

An ACC team arrested Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, former manager of Sonali Bank's principal branch in Bagerhat and incumbent senior principal officer of general manager office in Khulna.

Assistant Director Abul Hashem Kazi said Mujibur in collaboration with Senior Officer Sheikh Mahfuzur Rahman Babu, another officer and 12 clients created fake documents against the Secure Over Draft (SOD) of 150 clients between 2012 and 2015.

With the help of these fake documents, they took loan of about Tk 4.5 crore, he added.

When the matter came to light during internal audit in September 2015, Babu went into hiding.

Mujibur was withdrawn from his

SEE PAGE 11 COL