

220km Dhaka-Ctg elevated expressway mulled

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA) has worked out a plan to construct a 220-km elevated expressway with a multimodal transport corridor over the existing Dhaka-Chittagong highway to boost trade by ensuring faster communications between the two major cities.

Once the elevated expressway is constructed with rail tracks costing Tk 80,000 crore, a passenger will be able to travel from Dhaka to Chittagong or Chittagong to Dhaka within one hour by high speed train while it will take two hours by bus, claim BBA officials.

They also said a Chinese investor is keen on implementing the entire project on Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT) basis or under a government-to-government arrangement.

Transport and urban experts think elevated expressway is a better option than the at-grade (through land) one given the country's shrinking land.

Besides, they said, Tk 13,640 crore will have to be spent only on land acquisition and relocating other

establishments as opposed to removing a large number of houses, mega structures, schools and mosques to construct the at-grade expressway.

Under the circumstances, BBA executive engineer Wahiduzzaman told UNB that they have taken an initiative for building the 220-km elevated expressway with a multimodal transport corridor.

He said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has approved the project summary after it was sent to her at the end of 2016.

Following the PM's approval, Wahiduzzaman said, they have invited tender for conducting a feasibility study and 22 companies have submitted documents to take part in the bidding.

"We'll soon shortlist 4 to 7 companies examining their papers and then request them to submit their proposals to this end. We'll complete the tender process within a short time and send the proposal to the Cabinet Purchase Committee for approval," said BBA Chief Engineer Kabir Ahmed.

He hoped that the work on the feasibility study of the project will start within six months after receiving

approval from the cabinet body. "We hope the work on the elevated expressway project will begin in early 2020."

"A Chinese investor has already given us a proposal to implement the project. We're evaluating it. The investing company is willing to collect toll for 30 years on completion of the project and then hand it over to us. We're bargaining to fix it at 25 years instead of 30," he added.

Justifying the project, Kabir said it will not only ease traffic and make travelling faster, but also save huge agricultural lands, markets, mosques, educational institutions and establishments from being consumed by the construction of a new expressway on land for the same route.

Besides, he said, a huge amount of goods could be transported by freight trains from 10:00pm to 5:00am on the elevated expressway as pressure of passengers would be the lowest during that time period.

Talking to UNB, Urban transport system expert Prof Shamsul Hoque of Buet's civil engineering department said, "To the best of my knowledge, the Prime Minister has already approved elevated expressway. I also

personally think we should go for this option instead of at-grade one."

Controlling or ensuring vehicular movement on an at-grade expressway is quite impossible as it usually passes through many markets and establishments, he said, adding that there will be no such problem in the case of an elevated expressway.

"Dhaka-Chittagong Highway is our economic corridor. We should ensure multimodal transport corridor on this route integrating land use. Developing roads by acquiring land is an outdated and plain method," Prof Hoque added.

Urban expert and former chairman of University Grants Commission (UGC) Prof Nazrul Islam echoed Hoque's observations and said the at-grade expressway will not be feasible for the country for many reasons, including land shortage and over population.

"As we're now moving ahead to be a middle-income country, we should improve our transport sector and infrastructure for easy and faster transportation of goods and passengers. Elevated expressway can be a vital option in this regard."

Robbers loot Tk 15 lakh from six shops in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Robbers looted Tk 15 lakh from six shops in Khayerpukur village under Parbatipur upazila of Dinajpur early yesterday.

Locals said the robbers entered the shops by breaking the locks of the shops at night and looted money. Seeing all the locks broken in the morning, they informed police.

Mostaq Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Parbatipur Police Station, visited the spot.

BGB-BSF flag meeting held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A sector commander-level flag meeting between Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) was held at Benapole BGB headquarter camp yesterday.

The two sides discussed different border issues including drug smuggling, arms trading, human trafficking and illegal intrusion in the meeting, BGB sources said.

Brig Gen Jillur Rahman led the BGB team while Josowal Sing represented the BSF side.

11 shops, house gutted in fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A fire gutted 11 shops and a house at Halishahar Failyatoli Bazar in Chittagong city early yesterday.

The fire originated from an electric short circuit at one of the shops, said fire service sources.

Man's body recovered in Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police recovered the body of a man from a field at Aamtola village in Netrakona Sadar upazila yesterday.

Masud Miah, 35, son of Monnaf Miah of Aamtola, was strangled, said police. Police sent the body to Netrakona Adhunik Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Teenager found dead in Ghatail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Police recovered the body of an unidentified girl with burn injuries inside a forest on Soling Road in Langrabazar of Tangail's Ghatail upazila yesterday.

Police suspect that the girl was raped and then burnt. The body was sent to Tangail General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Labourer dies falling from tree

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A labourer died after falling from a branch of a rain tree at Baliaatali village in Amtali upazila of Barguna yesterday.

Md Siddiqur Rahman, 30, of the village, fell down while cutting a branch at Mojibur Rahman's house.

He was declared dead at Amtali Upazila Health Complex.

Temple ransacked in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A temple was ransacked in Sujanagar Uttarpara area of Rajshahi city yesterday.

"The attackers burst into the temple around 2:00pm, broke chairs and loud-speakers and also stole some chairs," said Jagadis Chandra Robidas, general secretary of Mohasomabesh Shingha that organised a Saraswati Puja there.

Hindus celebrate Ganga Snan

OUR CORRESPONDENT, C/nawabganj

Over one lakh Hindu devotees participated in the "Ganga Snan", a religious ritual of the Hindu community, yesterday at Janhobi Muni Ashram in Tattipur Maha Swamsan Ghat of Shibganj upazila of Chapainawabganj.

Hindu devotees from different parts of the country thronged the venue to take a dip in the Pagla River, a symbolic gesture, to wash away the sins. A daylong fair with 500 stalls was organised while religious songs were performed on the banks of the Pagla River, said Komal Kumar Tribedi, secretary of Tattipur Maha Swamsan and Ganga Snan Committee.

BOU students protest admission fee hike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The students of Bangladesh Open University (BOU) yesterday in Chittagong city's CRB area formed a human chain protesting the increase of various fees.

Tayabul Islam, publicity secretary of Dak Diye Jai, an organisation of the students of BOU, and student of BOU's HSC programme, said admission fees of different programmes was increased in 2016. The fees for SSC programme has been almost doubled from Tk 2,400 to Tk 4,000.

Badrul Haider Chowdhury, regional director of BOU Chittagong Regional Center, said it was the decision of the authorities.

Road crashes kill three

CITY DESK

A man was killed as a truck rammied a three-wheeler on Chittagong-Hathazari road in Egaro Mile area of Hathazari upazila in Chittagong yesterday afternoon.

The deceased -- Mohammad Milan, 28, from Sariakandi of Bogra -- was driver of the three-wheeler and he died on the spot, said police.

In Brahmanbaria sadar, a man was killed on the spot and two others were injured as a cargo truck collided head-on with an auto-rickshaw carrying the three on Comilla-Sylhet highway in Suhilpur Mirhati area

yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Awwal Miah, 65, from Bhatpur village of the upazila.

In Panchagarh, a private university student died in a road accident at Sabujpara in Debiganj upazila headquarters on Thursday afternoon, reports our Thakurgaon correspondent.

The deceased was identified as Mujahidul Islam Sabbir, 25, a pharmacy student at State University of Dhaka, and son of Nazrul Islam from Panchpir village in Boda upazila.

Sabbir's motorbike veered off the road and hit a tree, said police.

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Police refuse
FROM PAGE 3
Earlier on Thursday, Additional Superintendent (South) of Police in Chittagong AKM Emran Bhuiyan told The Daily Star that they would file a case based on the family's statement.
When contacted yesterday afternoon, he said he was on leave urging this correspondent to talk to the OC.
On Wednesday, Ali was killed in the clash between two groups of villagers during a meeting in favour of the 1,320mw of power plant in Gondamara Union of Banskhal.

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● The Expression of Interest and accompanying documents should be submitted to: the Reception Desk of UNICEF Office at the 4th floor of BSL Office Complex, 1 Minto Road, Dhaka-1000, no later than: **Wednesday, 15 February 2017 by 14:00 hours.**
● The sealed package should be marked with the title "EOI for Pre-qualification of Contractors for Construction Works in Bangladesh" and addressed to the Chief, Supply & Procurement Section, UNICEF Bangladesh.
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