



Metro rail project slows down

Tender process of most components behind schedule, delayed by a year

Slow tender bidding process has pushed the metro rail construction work nearly a year behind schedule.

Of the eight components of the project, the ground work of one was ongoing. Even though prequalification of bidders in the remaining seven components was done, the final contracts have not been signed yet.

The agreements were supposed to be signed last year. The horrific Gulshan attack in July last year is to blame for lion share of the delays. The attack left 20 hostages, including seven Japanese and nine Italians, dead.

Following the attack, Japanese bidders and consultants restrained from travelling to Bangladesh, owing to security concerns, which resulted in the delays, said official sources.

The situation had turned so bad that the authorities of the Tk 22,000 crore project could not spend half the money allocated to them this fiscal year and had to return it.

Two years ago the project director of the 20km rail project predicted that they would be able to start building the elevated overpasses by the first quarter of this year.

But now, they are struggling to even begin construction of the viaducts by the end of the year, nine months behind schedule.

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Land development work going on in the metro rail depot of north Uttara in the capital. Even though work on this component of the rail project has begun, final contracts for the other seven components have not been signed. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ



Construction work going on in 1 of 8 components


Expected trial run to start in 2019

Expected commercial operation in 2021

Project cost Tk 22,000 crore

Japan to provide Tk 16,600 crore in soft loan

14 trains to run 3 minutes apart from Uttara to Motijheel



TOP QUOTE

"Human rights of those who have long been languishing in jail without trial are being violated."

BANGLADESH NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION BANGLADESH CHAIRMAN
KAZI REAZUL HOQUE
AT A PROGRAMME AT THE SUPREME COURT YESTERDAY

Flood grips Chalan Beel

Boro crops damaged; livelihood in haor areas at stake; death of 6 cattle being probed

STAR REPORT

Early flooding hit Natore's Chalan Beel area yesterday, submerging standing Boro crops on around 1,500 hectares of land.

The blow to beel farmers comes at a time when at least six lakh tonnes of Boro paddy were lost to flashflood that struck the country's northeastern haor regions at the end of last month.

Fed by heavy rains, the Atrai river overflowed and flooded Chalan Beel, breaching the protection embankments in Natore's Beeldahar and Bakhtiarpur areas, said Shudhangshu Kumar Sarkar, executive engineer of Water Development Board (WDB) in the district.

The water level of the river has been on the rise since Monday, he added.

Quoting Singra upazila Chairman Shafiqul Islam Shafiq, Upazila Nirbahi Officer Nazmul Ahsan said around 1,500 hectares of cropland were affected.

With the help of the WDB and the upazila administration, farmers are trying to repair the embankments and sluice gates in Bakhtiarpur and Jormollik areas of the upazila.

According to statistics of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), crops have been cultivated on 37,200 hectares of land in the Chalan Beel area this year.

Chalan Beel is a vast low-lying area in the lower Atrai basin, and spreads

across Singra and Gurudaspur upazilas in Natore, Chatmohar, Bhangura and Faridpur in Pabna, and Ullahpara, Raiganj and Tarash upazilas in Sirajganj.

It consists of a large number of beels connected to each other by many channels forming an unbroken water body in the rainy season.

Abdur Razzak, a farmer at Natore's Parkoil village, said floodwater damaged his 11 bighas of cropland.

"I'm helpless... All I can do is watch standing crops go under water," he said.

Another farmer in the same area, Solaiman Ali, said he had taken loans from different non-governmental

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Farmers pull out their peanut plants in Chalan Beel yesterday after the beel went under water in an early flood, damaging crops on 1,500 hectares of land.

PHOTO: STAR



Cameron in the capital

UNB, Dhaka

Former British Prime Minister David Cameron arrived in the capital on a brief visit last night.

Officials from the British High Commission and Bangladesh foreign ministry received him at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 11:05pm, said an official.

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Don't torture

PM asks Rab to make sure nobody is tortured or harassed unnecessarily

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the members of Rapid Action Battalion to make sure that common people do not fall victim to unnecessary torture and oppression while the law enforcers carry out their duties.

"You all must give attention to the fact that common people don't suffer in any way... they must not face any unnecessary torture and oppression," she said.

Hasina was speaking at the PM's Special Darbar marking the Rab's 13th founding anniversary at its Kurmitola headquarters in the city.

She asked the members of the elite force to work more sincerely to ensure the safety of people's lives and property. "Remember, we're public servants as our wages and

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Issues can be resolved thru' talks

Law minister says on CJ's remarks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In no country do the chief justices speak so much in public or express so much anger unless it involves judicial activities, Law Minister Anisul Huq has said.

"I want to say that definitely he [the CJ] speaks when it is necessary and I don't deny it. But if he has any sorrow and grievances, he may inform us without speaking it in public and we may try to solve them," he said.

Anisul made the
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SWAT hunts for 'Neo JMB' men in C'nawabganj

Cordons off hideout; grenades hurled at law enforcers

STAR REPORT

After a daylong operation, police last night suspended their raid on a house in Chapainawabganj where four suspected militants along with two minor children are believed to be hiding.

Investigators believe the four include multiple mid-level leaders of "Neo JMB," a terrorist group police claim was responsible for last year's deadly Gulshan attack.

The operation will resume this morning.

On information, counterterrorism officials and local police cordoned off the one-storey house inside a mango orchard at Shibnagar of Shibganj upazila around 4:30am, said Mohibul Islam Khan, deputy commissioner of Counter

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AQIS head of Bangladesh affairs killed in Afghanistan

Claims its 'top leader'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tariq alias Sohail, the "chief" of the Bangladeshi affairs of al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), and five of his accomplices were killed in Afghanistan's Qandahar, says a statement purportedly from the top leader of the terror outfit.

The statement, uploaded on early Wednesday on Telegram, a cloud-based instant messaging service, however, does not say when

and how the militants

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Mustang
53 YEARS

THE LEGEND IS HERE

Ford
Go Further

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SpecialSource/Instagram/April 2017