

RAIL LINK TO ROOPPUR POWER PLANT

Railway signs contract with jt venture firm

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway (BR) yesterday signed a contract with a joint venture company, for the construction of a rail line to link the under-construction Rooppur nuclear power plant with the country's rail network. The agreement was signed at a programme held at the Rail Bhaban in the capital.

Mojibur Rahman, general manager (West) of Bangladesh Railway, signed the contract on behalf of the railway, while Suvash Chandra Hawlader, managing director of Standard Engineers Ltd, signed on behalf of the Indo-Bangla joint-venture company.

The three companies of the joint venture are Bangladeshi companies Standard Engineers Ltd and Castle Construction Company Ltd (CCCL), and Indian company GTP Infra Project Ltd.

The 26.52 kilometers (including a 4.50 km loop-line) dual-gauge railway line between Pabna's Ishwardi Bypass and Rooppur power plant will be constructed within a year and half at the cost of Tk 29755.74 lakh.

Railways Minister Mujibul Haque

said the Rooppur power plant, the country's first nuclear power plant, is a very important project undertaken by the government, with the Prime Minister's Office directly keeping updates of its construction on a regular basis.

The main purpose of the track is to transport heavy equipment and goods for the power plant project, and also for its waste management, he said adding that the joint venture company would start their work within few days.

He asked the company officials to maintain quality and complete their work within the given deadline of 18 months, starting from yesterday.

Besides the rail track, seven culverts, 13 level-crossing gates, one station building and one railway platform would be constructed under the project.

CCCL Director and Awami League Lawmaker from Jessore Kazi Nabil Ahmed, Railways Secretary Mofazzel Hossain and Railways Director General Amzad Hossain also spoke at the programme.

May reasserts authority

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plan for a "business friendly" Brexit.

She looks set on facing down a rebellion in her Conservative Party, where hardline Brexit supporters are livid over her plans to negotiate "a free trade area for goods" with the EU. One described accepting EU rules as "the ultimate betrayal".

Above a picture of her cabinet, including her new foreign secretary Jeremy Hunt and Brexit minister Dominic Raab after a mini-reshuffle late on Monday, May wrote on her twitter feed: "Productive Cabinet meeting this morning - looking ahead to a busy week."

Her spokesman said she had welcomed the new members of her cabinet and they had discussed the publication of a white paper policy document on Britain's future ties with the EU and stepping up preparations for any no-deal outcome to the negotiations with Brussels.

Other ministers described the meeting as "very good".

"I think it is right that the cabinet backs the prime minister and speaks with one voice and if people don't do that then they have to go," Justice Secretary David Gauke told BBC radio.

May must now move quickly to try to win the EU's support for her Brexit proposal to unblock talks. These have all but stalled because of her reticence

of show her cards until now for fear of angering one of the two main factions of her party.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel arrives in London later yesterday for a meeting with May and other leaders to discuss the Western Balkans.

The British leader may have stilled the waters over a possible leadership contest, but some Conservative Brexit supporters are still incensed over what they see as her decision to break her promise for a clean break with the EU.

"It is the ultimate betrayal of our democracy and people's belief in it. It's not even an accidental betrayal, it was planned and plotted well in advance," said Conservative lawmaker Andrew Bridgen.

"Never have so many campaigned for so long and so hard for so little," he told Reuters.

But while many Brexit campaigners were still hoping for a vote of confidence to oust May, it is unlikely that they have the numbers. They also are in a minority in parliament to try to change any deal that is agreed with the EU.

At a meeting with Conservative lawmakers on Monday, she was cheered and applauded by many, having warned them that internal squabbling could pave the way for socialist opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn to take power instead.

Lots of fights

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between the two attacking sides of world football. France are in possession of the richest talent and Belgium in the company of their Golden Generation. Both teams have already proved they can score, hold on to it and come back into the match after conceding goals.

There will be lots of small fights within the fight.

A fight of class between No. 10s is one of those.

Although not always the case, the best player of the team usually puts on the number 10 jersey in football. The No. 10 jersey carries with it a sense of greatness, a sign of respect and a symbol of hope. The history of the World Cup is filled with magical players who, with this jersey on, put in amazing performances for their countries. The No. 10 jersey was popularised with

ing the first teenager since the Brazilian legend to score two goals in a World Cup knockout match.

There will be a battle of wits between two coaches -- France's Didier Deschamps and Belgium's Roberto Martinez. The game plan is all too crucial. At this stage of the tournament, they have adequate knowledge about each other's weaknesses and strength. So, the homework is done and the plot ready.

There will be a battle of efficiency between two captains in implementing game plans. France's Hugo Lloris can count on his captaincy experience to prevail over Eden Hazard, Belgium's captain for this World Cup. Lloris will keep under the bar while Hazard will lead the attack from midfield. The captain's armband is a test of character. Some rise to the opportunity and become magnificent. Hazard is



Police take quota reform movement leaders Faruk Hassan, left, and Moshir Rahman to a Dhaka court on Johnson Road yesterday. The court later placed the two joint conveners of Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Adhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad on two-day remand each in cases filed over attacking the Dhaka University VC's residence and cops.

PHOTO: STAR

Attackers free, victims in fear

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police told this newspaper that no officer wants to put his career at stake by filing a case against BCL men.

Asked what steps he would take against the attackers, RU VC M Abdus Sobhan yesterday said he was now in Dhaka and didn't see the news report. He then hung up the phone.

This correspondent contacted RU Proctor Lutfor Rahman and wanted to know what he was doing about it. "I told you earlier and again I am saying that the incident took place outside the campus, and so it is the responsibility of police," he said in reply.

When told that it was his students who were involved in the incident, he said, "The victim didn't file any complaint yet."

According to Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua, it's not necessary that the victim himself has to file an FIR when any cognisable offence has taken place.

"The police can file an FIR relating to any cognisable offence. In such instances, a police officer has the authority to make an arrest without a warrant and start an investigation with or without the permission of a court."

The Supreme Court lawyer explained, "Let's assume that a police officer was beaten up with a bamboo stick and got killed. And his poor family didn't go to a police station to file a case. Does that mean police would not take any action?"

"What's most important is whether you [police] are informed about the crime or not. If you are informed that a crime has taken place, you will take action."

About the inaction of the university authorities, he said, "If your student commits any murder or rape but no complaint is filed, wouldn't you take action?"

On the role of RU proctor, Jyotirmoy said, "The protector claimed the university authorities cannot take action as the incident took place outside the campus, and again he said he would take action if the victim files a complaint."

That means his first argument is flawed, he added.

With the authorities turning a blind eye or showing reluctance to take action, most of the quota reform leaders have left the campuses fearing further attacks and harassment.

"Many of us like me are staying outside the campus. We did nothing

wrong. But those so-called BCL leaders who beat us up like dogs are moving freely on the campus," said a quota movement organiser of RU, wishing not to be named.

At Dhaka University, BCL activists swooped on quota reformists at least four times. Three attacks were carried out in three consecutive days from June 30.

The first attack took place when the quota reform leaders were preparing for a prescheduled press conference in front of the DU Central Library. It left seven injured.

Nurul Haq Nur, a joint convener of Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Adhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad, was beaten up mercilessly and taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he was denied treatment.

While under treatment at a private hospital, he was allegedly forced to leave the hospital in the dead of night on July 2.

Four quota protesters were beaten up in front of the National Museum at Shabbagh on July 1.

The next day, the BCL men appeared more aggressive when they beat up the protesters who gathered on the Central Shaheed Minar premises to form a human chain.

They picked up Faruk Hassan, a demonstrator, and handed him over to Shabbagh Police Station. Before the attack, three on-duty police members were found leaving the Shaheed Minar seeing the BCL men.

Later, a female protester, Moriom Mannan Farah, alleged at a press conference that she was also physically assaulted by a group of youths who picked her up from the Shaheed Minar area on that day and handed her over to the Shabbagh Police Station. She also described awful harassment in police custody.

Earlier on May 16, some BCL men allegedly threatened Nur and Muhammad Rashed Khan, another joint convener of the platform, with death.

They immediately contacted the DU proctor and dialled the national emergency helpline (999), but the proctor did nothing to those BCL men and only asked the hall provost to visit Nur's room at Muhsin hall.

The next day, they went to Shabbagh Police Station to file a general diary but police refused to register

any complaint.

Instead of taking steps against the errant BCL men, the university administration is allegedly asking students to stay away from quota protests.

"Our provost asked us not to take part in the quota reform movement," a female protester and resident of a DU hall, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"The provost said he won't take any responsibility for any untoward situation and that the hall authorities are under pressure."

Contacted, DU Proctor AKM Golam Rabbani, said, "When we, the university authorities, consider taking any action, we do not serve the purpose of any organisation. We are here to serve the general students."

He added, "A seven-member probe body led by a pro-vice chancellor has been formed. It will look into the matters. You have to wait until the probe is over."

In Chittagong University, at least five quota reformists and a campus correspondent came under attacks by the pro-government student body in the last three months and many others received threats on Facebook.

CU Proctor Ali Asgar Chowdhury said they did not get any complaint from any student. Belal Mohammad Jahangir, officer-in-charge of Hathazari Police Station, echoed the same.

Terming the present quota reform movement illogical, the proctor said those who want to hamper development initiatives of the incumbent government and those involved in Jamaat-Shibir politics have been trying to create unrest on the campus in the name of movement.

Quota reformists at Jahangirnagar University came under attacks at least four times since April.

One of the incidents took place on April 11 in the presence of Vice Chancellor Prof Farzana Islam and other teachers, as 40 to 50 BCL men led by JU BCL President Jewel Rana and General Secretary SM Abu Sufian swooped on the protesters with sticks, injuring at least 15.

JU Proctor Shikder Md Zulkarnine then said steps will be taken after analysing footage of the incident. But there is no visible action till date.

This correspondent could not contact Inspector General of Police Javed Patwary despite several attempts yes-

terday.

Masudur Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of DMP, denied the allegation against police of bias. Asked about the allegation brought by Moriom, he said they will probe it if there is a written complaint.

Saifur Rahman Sohag and SM Jakir Hossain, president and general secretary of BCL central committee, could not be reached over the phone last night.

In April, students of public and private universities across the country took to the streets demanding reforms in the quota system.

In the wake of the protests, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in parliamentary on April 11 announced abolishing quotas.

After the government's failure to issue a gazette notification on the PM's announcement, the quota reform platform on May 14 started an indefinite boycott of classes and examinations at all universities and colleges.

They issued an ultimatum for the publication of the notification by May 13.

On May 21, they postponed their decision of boycotting examinations considering the month of Ramadan and at the prospect of "session jams" caused by the strike.

However, on June 26, the PM suggested continuation of the existing freedom fighter quota in civil service.

SWISS, DUTCH MISSIONS CONCERNED

The Switzerland and Dutch embassies in Dhaka yesterday expressed concerns over the recent attacks on peaceful demonstrations in the capital and other cities, reports UNB.

"The Embassy of Switzerland observes with great concern the recent attacks on peaceful demonstrations in Dhaka and other cities," reads a message on the embassy's official Facebook page.

The Dutch embassy in a separate message says it has noted with great concern the recent attacks on people exercising their right to engage in peaceful protests.

Protection of these rights is a cornerstone of the Netherlands' foreign policy and their engagement with partners, including Bangladesh, it says in a Facebook post.

[Our DU, RU, CU and JU correspondents contributed to this report]

Checkpoints at DU entrances soon: VC

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religious establishments on its campus.

Many, including ex-DU VCs Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique and Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, argued the move goes against the very character of the country's premier university which gave birth to some major democratic movements.

But Akhtaruzzaman yesterday said the university was no place for shopping; it's rather a place for teachers and students.

"All types of programmes would be arranged here as it is the 'birthplace of democracy'. Activities related to education, culture, debate, music will take place here and people will come to take part in such programmes. We always welcome educational and cultural activities."

But, intrusion of outsiders may disrupt normal life of the students and the university family, which is not expected. And we cannot let this place be destroyed with people pouring into the campus, he said.

"Some people will spoil the environment of education by using loudspeakers inside the campus ... we would not tolerate such acts."

He said on several occasions vehi-

cles of outsiders entered the campus, and it must stop.

"We will try to ensure security of the students. Security checkpoints do not mean it's a cantonment or police post. Our security guards will be posted there."

Speaking about class boycott by students, he said, "Obstructing students from taking part in academic activities is not a good sign. I have been seeing such activities for the last three months. Some people are barring students. We do not welcome such acts and discourage students from boycotting classes."

He claimed that "evil infiltrators" have joined the quota reform movement lately.

"The movement was spontaneous and thousands of students took part in it. We have given moral support to them also."

Prof Emajuddin and Prof Arefin Siddique and different organisations sharply criticised the DU move and demanded its immediate withdrawal.

Prof Emajuddin said the decision was neither right nor acceptable.

"This is the premier institution of the country, so people will come here," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

"University is an open place and

you can't shut its door," he said adding, "I was a student of the university and then a teacher. We still have our bonding with it. So imposing such a decision is not right."

Prof Arefin, the immediate past VC, said, "The decision goes against the long heritage of the university... Imposing such a restriction is unthinkable, unimaginable and bizarre."

"I don't know how they will implement it but it was not right at all to make such a decision in the first place." Dhaka University is a centre of free thinkers and many students from other institutions and even people from other countries visit the university regularly, he said.

"If everyone has to take permission to enter the campus then it would be a huge task. I don't know if the proctor's office is ready for this," he said, adding that the university is run with taxpayers' money.

"Is there a plan to turn the university into a cantonment?" he asked.

"These days, even cantonments are kept open. We can walk through the cantonment; there is no problem there. When cantonments are kept open, how rational it would be to bring the university under such restrictions?"

The question is whether they understand the concept of a university," Prof Arefin said.

He said the recent incidents centring on the quota reform movement may have led to the decision, but such problems can be solved using the existing proctorial rules as both the victims and attackers are DU students.

Terming the decision "very sad", Bangladesh Workers Party, a ruling Awami League ally, demanded an immediate withdrawal of the ban.

"The university authorities never took such a decision.... It goes against the very concept of university," the party said in a statement.

DU Unit of Bangladesh Chhatra Union said the decision raised questions about the history, heritage and democratic atmosphere of the university.

"In the name of security, the university administration is erecting a 'wall of protectionism' defying the democratic environment of the university," the organisation said.

Progotishil Chhatra Jote, an alliance of left-leaning student organisations, in a press statement said students would not allow the university to curb people's freedom through such undemocratic decisions.

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Pele's phenomenal performance in 1958, and then almost all the greats including Maradona arrived thereafter wearing the shirt and made it more famous. In this World Cup, Lionel Messi and Neymar too wore the No. 10 but could not do much.

It would be interesting to see how the No. 10s of France and Belgium fare. Eden Hazard is not only the best in the Belgium camp but also one of a few top playmakers in the world eligible to wear the number. He is the heart of Belgium that never stops. Either he is scoring or making intelligent assists. He is active all the time. On the other hand, a French wonderkid is wearing the No. 10 in his debut World Cup. And Kylian Mbappe has already more than justified the decision.

Interestingly though, Mbappe has invoked memories of Pele by becom-

becoming magnificent.

It will also be a battle between midfield marshals to dictate the game. It would be a treat to watch how France's masterful duo of Paul Pogba and N'Golo Kante operate against Belgium's highly energetic trio of Axel Witsel, Nacer Chadli and Marouane Fellaini.

And, of course, goals are all that matter in the end. So, the focus will be on two rival strikers -- France's Kylian Mbappe and Belgium's Romelu Lukaku. Both are of African origin: formidable, speedy and hungry for goals.

But which team are going to celebrate in the end? It's a close call. But it is safe to say that the team that prevails in the majority of battles within battles would win the match!

The writer is former Sports Editor of The Daily Star