

INDO-BANGLA PIPELINE Hasina, Modi to launch 3 more projects Tuesday

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Prime Ministers Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi will jointly kick off the groundbreaking ceremony of a cross-border oil pipeline and two key rail connectivity projects this week.

The prime ministers are expected to launch the projects via video conferencing from Dhaka and New Delhi on Tuesday, a week after they launched two railway projects and a power link between the two countries through another video conference.

Chief ministers of West Bengal and Tripura Mamata Banerjee and Biplab Kumar Deb also participated.

The oil pipeline will supply one million tonnes of high speed diesel a year to Bangladesh. The diesel is currently transported through a cross-border train from Numaligarh refinery in north eastern state of Assam to Dinajpur in Bangladesh. The railway lines will connect Joydevpur and Tongi with Dhaka, an Indian official said.

Since 2011, India has announced eight billion line of credit to Bangladesh, the highest for any

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Plant resumes

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On September 9, the BCMCL resumed supplying coal to the plant.

Another 125 MW unit would restart as early as possible, said the chief engineer.

Coal production at BCMCL started on September 8, said its newly appointed Managing Director Abdur Rahman.

"We are supplying all the produced coal to the nearby plant so that they can resume power generation," he said. The mine is producing roughly 1,400 tonnes of coal every day and the volume would double in a couple of weeks, he added.

The BCMCL authorities suspended coal production on June 16 for developing fresh coal pockets underground as the stock of existing pocket was consumed.

A high official of Petrobangla on July 16 detected disappearance of 1.45 lakh tonnes of coal from its 17-acre stockyard, which ultimately led to shutdown of the plant.

The market price of the disappeared coal was estimated at Tk 230 crore.

Three high officials of BCMCL including then managing director Habib Uddin Ahmed, general manager Abu Taher Md Nuruzzaman and deputy general manager AKM Khaledur Islam were suspended and Abul Kashem Prodhania, general manager and company's secretary, was transferred to PGCL in Sirajganj on July 19.

Anisur Rahman, manager (Admin) of BCMCL, also filed a case with Parbatipur police on July 24 brining corruption accusation against 19 officials. The Anti-Corruption Commission is investigating the scam.

As public suffering was on the rise in eight districts of Dinajpur and Rangpur regions, PDB operated one of the units on August 20 for eight days.

Three RMG

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the same account from the bus staffers.

When the families failed to contact the three men, they went to the DB office in the capital's Minto road where officers said they didn't know anything about the matter, Shah Alam said.

Shaon said, "My brother didn't commit any crime. It was a planned murder. There was no case against him. We want justice."

He added that the families would file a case.

Monirul Islam, additional superintendent of police (admin) in Narayanganj, said there was no DB operation in Narayanganj at the time of the incident.

"We just recovered the bodies. If the family members complaint, we would record a case," he said.

Family members took the bodies after autopsy.

BODY OF MURDER ACCUSED FOUND

Bullet-ridden body a murder suspect was found in Sathkhali area of Magura-Jessore highway on Thursday night, police said.

Shaheen alias Pagla Shaheen, 45, was accused of killing Alamgir Hossain, who was the general secretary of Jessore Sadar Juba League, reports our Benapole correspondent.

Family members said Shaheen had been missing for several days.



A passenger bus flipped onto its side on Dinajpur-Rangpur highway in Central Bus Terminal area of Rangpur after it collided with another bus yesterday. The accident left two people dead. Story on page 5.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

No Ducusu polls in 27 years

FROM PAGE 1

They were also found in the dark as to where the money is spent.

The DU has about 37,000 students at the moment. This means the authorities earned an estimated Tk 44.4 lakh in Ducusu and hall union fees last year alone.

Interestingly, the DU authorities allocate separate budgets for Ducusu and hall unions every year.

In the current fiscal year, Tk 20.08 lakh was allocated for Ducusu. The amount was Tk 19.13 lakh in 2017-2018 and Tk 13.80 lakh in 2016-2017, according to the DU's annual budget book.

Treasurer Prof Kamal Uddin claimed they used the funds for the "welfare of the students" but he could not specify where and how.

"When it was functional, the Ducusu office spent the money for the university's development work. But in the absence of the Ducusu, teachers are now using it for such development projects," he said.

A large sum of the money is used to run the Ducusu cafeteria and conservatory, he claimed.

It may be mentioned that the university authorities allocate separate budget for the Ducusu cafeteria. In the current fiscal, the cafeteria got an allocation of Tk 1 crore.

Treasurer Prof Kamal also said that parts of the money are given to the hall authorities for students' welfare and development work.

But Salimullah Muslim Hall Provost Prof Mahbubul Alam Joarder and Zahurul Haq Hall Provost Prof Delwar Hossain told The Daily Star last night that they did not receive any such funds.

Ducusu came into being in 1922, a year after the DU was established, to promote common cultural activities within the university and foster a spirit of cooperation among the students of different halls.

In 1992, the university authorities dissolved the Ducusu Executive Committee of 1990-91, which was formed through the 1990 elections. No elections have been held since then despite repeated demands by various student organisations, especially the

leftist ones.

Against this backdrop, the DU authorities will sit with different student bodies on the campus tomorrow to discuss the long overdue elections.

It comes just days after a contempt of court petition was filed with the High Court for the DU authorities' failure to comply with a previous HC directive to hold the election.

On January 17, the HC ordered the DU authorities to hold the Ducusu election at a suitable time, preferably within six months.

STUDENTS IN THE DARK

Over the last few months, The Daily Star interviewed 100 DU students from different departments, halls and academic year who are currently paying the fees.

Nearly half of them said they were not aware that the authorities were charging them in the name of Ducusu and hall unions. However, they know that the unions remain inactive for the last 27 years.

Sumaiya Piya, a first-year student of

English department, said she had not heard about the Ducusu fees before. Dip Das of applied statistics said he did not even know the elaboration of Ducusu.

"It's illegal to collect fees from students as the Ducusu remains inactive," said Masud Mahdi of Mass Communication and Journalism.

He also said the DU authorities should hold Ducusu elections or stop charging students in the name of the unions.

Tanjim Uddin Khan, an associate professor at the international relations department, said, "Taking fees in the name of Ducusu is totally unfair as it has been inactive for the last 27 years.

"Moreover, Ducusu election is more important than the budget for Ducusu. A university can't operate without students' union."

The Daily Star called DU Vice-chancellor Prof Akhtaruzzaman several times for his comment last night, but his phone was found switched off.

Out of love for dead son

FROM PAGE 16

Using sand and gravel collected from building sites, Bilhore has filled in almost 600 potholes across India's financial capital in the past three years.

The 48-year-old vegetable vendor does it to pay tribute to his beloved son and in the hope that it will save lives.

"Prakash's sudden death left a huge void in our lives. I do this work to remember and honour him.

"I also don't want anyone else to lose a loved one like we have," Bilhore tells AFP at the modest apartment he shares with his wife, daughter and

extended family.

Prakash Bilhore was travelling pillion when the motorbike he was on with his cousin hit a deep pothole, sending them both flying through the air.

Prakash, who wasn't wearing a helmet, suffered fatal brain damage. His cousin, who was wearing a helmet, walked away with minor injuries.

The tragic accident occurred during Mumbai's summer monsoon when heavy rains are blamed for causing crater-like holes on the teeming coastal city's roads.

Potholes are so common that a campaign is

under way to have Mumbai featured in the Guinness Book of Records as the city with the most potholes.

Navin Lade, a resident, claims to have recorded more than 27,000 holes on the website www.mumbaipotholes.com, although local officials dispute this findings.

Government statistics show that potholes were responsible for the deaths of 3,597 people across India last year, an average of 10 a day.

Citizens blame government apathy, accusing local authorities of failing to maintain roads properly.

"The government needs to take responsibility

and create better infrastructure," urges Bilhore.

He says he has repaired 585 potholes, many of them alone; others with the help of volunteers who are inspired by his story.

Bilhore has been featured in countless Indian newspaper articles and received several awards, earning him the nickname "pothole dada", an affectionate term in India for a respected male.

"Recognition of our work has given me strength to deal with the pain and wherever I go I feel Prakash is standing with me" says Bilhore.

"As long as I am alive and can walk I will get rid of all of these potholes."

256sq miles of land lost since 1967

FROM PAGE 1

The extreme erosion patterns of the Padma have two main causes. First, it is a natural, free-flowing river with little bank protection, other than some occasional sandbags to protect buildings. Second, the bank sits on a large sand bed that can be eroded quickly.

Scientists measure erosion on the river by noting differences in its width, depth, shape, and overall appearance on satellite images. The NASA report, "Padma River: The Shape of Erosion" compares natural-colour satellite images showing the changes to the shape and width of the river since 1988.

flow wears away the outer edges, widening the channel. The flow on the inner edge has less energy, allowing more sediment to be deposited there. Sometimes meandering rivers leave scars where the water once flowed, as it can be seen in the 2014 image of the Harirampur region in Manikganj.

The sediments can come from a variety of sources. One theory suggests that some of the sediments are remnants from a landslide triggered by an earthquake in 1950. Researchers think the coarser material (like sand) took half a century to pass through the river.

Over the past three decades, the river

The river's curves became most extreme from 1995-1996. The curve started to develop in 1992, began to decline in 2002, and has since disappeared.

Researchers are particularly interested in the Char Janajati area, the site of a new bridge crossing. As one of Bangladesh's biggest construction projects, the Padma river bridge will connect the eastern and western parts of the country and shorten travel times between some locations from thirteen hours to three.

"There are some concerns that erosion could threaten the construction of the bridge, although some researchers



Each "twist and zigzag" is said to tell a different geologic story about the river. The images were acquired by NASA's Landsat satellites. All images were acquired in January and February, during the dry season.

Over the years, researchers have observed an increase in the river's "sinuosity" and "braiding". Sinuosity is the tendency of the river to snake back and forth in an S-shape across its plain. Rivers with high sinuosity are labeled "meandering".

Such rivers are said to evolve as the

has changed from a relatively narrow, straight line to meandering to braided and, most recently, back to straight. In the image sequence, the most noticeable change occurs upstream near the Harirampur upazila region, which experienced the most erosion.

A large flood rose over these banks in 1998, exacerbated by the opening of the Farakka Barrage (dam) in India, which released more water into Bangladesh, according to the report.

Further downstream, meandering bends eroded the land near Char Janajati.

believe it could actually stabilise the land and reduce erosion once it is finished," the report says.

In recent years, Padma's erosion rates, sinuosity, and braiding have actually decreased. Erosion is said to have slowed as the meandering bends disappeared due to sedimentation.

"But that does not mean the area is free from erosion. Any disturbance in the ecosystem, such as floods, landslides, or construction, could influence the morphology of the river," the report mentions.

BNP 'finalises' 100 party

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Despite there is no intra-party conflict in the 100 constituencies, the BNP has prepared a list of two to three more prospective candidates for each of those constituencies as a backup plan. If any of the chosen 100 is declared disqualified as a candidate, the BNP will pick its nominee from the back-up candidates, party leaders said.

The opposition party may set aside 50 to 100 seats for its current and any future allies. It now leads the 20-party alliance.

The BNP high-command has been working to finalise the list of prospective candidates for the remaining constituencies. Tarique has been coordinating the candidate selection process in consultation with the party's senior leaders.

The BNP's key ally Jamaat cannot contest the next Jatiya Sangshad polls as its registration with the Election Commission has been cancelled. Party sources said the BNP has not made any decision over backing any independent MP candidates from Jamaat.

According to party insiders, the BNP was simultaneously making preparations for the elections and a movement demanding Khaleda's release from jail and national polls under a non-partisan interim government, as it demanded.

The BNP chief landed in jail in February after being convicted of graft.

The party is yet to announce whether it will participate in the parliamentary polls as its demands remain unmet. It had boycotted the January 5, 2014, national polls as it was not held under a non-partisan interim government, as it demanded.

Following the drafting of a list of 40,000 polling stations by the EC, the BNP has already asked its grassroots leaders to form as many election centre-based committees within shortest possible time.

Party leaders said the committees

B Chowdhury, Dr Kamal to continue nat'l unity efforts

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain and former president AQM Badrudozza Chowdhury are going to announce their pledge today to continue their efforts to forge a "greater national unity" to press home a five-point demand, including formation of a non-party polls-time government.

At a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club, they will also present a nine-point objective.

"An unelected government without any public support is in power now. They are clinging to power by carrying out terrorist activities, arrests, filing false cases and using the police administration," according to an announcement finalised by Jatiya Oikya Pokriya and Juktofront.

The Daily Star has obtained a copy of the announcement.

"There is no alternative to forge a greater unity if the country and its people are to get rid of such a situation and effective democracy, rule of law and impartial enforcement of law have to be ensured in the country," it read.

Led by Bikalpadhara Bangladesh chief Badrudozza, the Juktofront alliance is comprised of ASM Abdur Rob's Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) and Mahmudur Rahman Manna's Nagorik Oikya. Gonoforum President Dr Kamal is leading the other platform, Jatiya Oikya Pokriya.

Their demands include dissolution of parliament before the announcement of the polls schedule for creating a level playing field, ensuring freedom of expression and reconstitution of the Election Commission with acceptable persons through talks to hold a free, fair and neutral parliamentary election.

The two political platforms will seek withdrawal of "false cases" against the leaders and activists of quota reform and road safety movements and release of all the detained political leaders.

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Case of error

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Police in the raid arrested five, including Kismat, and seized eight petrol bombs and some iron rods, reads the case statement.

His wife Akikunnesa claimed seven to eight cops took away her husband at 11:40pm on August 31. "Everything mentioned in the case is false," she added.

Kismat is the organising secretary of district BNP.

This correspondent visited the area yesterday and talked to five locals, who said as far as they know, no such gathering took place that night.

Contacted SM Ziaul Haque, Officer-in-Charge of the police station, said mentioning same person as different accused may have occurred due to "typing mistakes".

"In every case, the accused claim to be innocent," he said, adding the incident mentioned in the case is true.