



PHOTO: RAJIB RAHMAN

Patenga beach is considered a tourist attraction but used to have few visitor-friendly services. With a 16km protection embankment and ring road under construction, people will now have somewhere to sit, chat and enjoy snacks in a safe environment. The initiative has already started drawing visitors in large numbers. The photos were taken on Wednesday.

Invest in Rajshahi

Mayor Liton asks foreign investors

BSS, Rajshahi

Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton has sought foreign investment in Rajshahi for boosting its socio-economic condition.

Rajshahi has enormous prospects of foreign investment as it is enriched with natural resources including surplus agricultural production, he said. Foreign investment can be the vital means of bolstering economic condition, he added.

Liton made the observations while sharing views with a Canada-based investment team and members of Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce and Industries (RCCI) at the mayor's City Bhaban office in Rajshahi yesterday.

Taking part in the discussion, the investment team leader, Monoj Bishwash, discussed the issue of generating 100 megawatts of solar power in the vast Padma riverbed.

He also put forward a proposal of boosting revenue earning of the city corporation through capacity building.

The mayor called for more industries in the region for strengthening its economy, and at the same time, improving the living condition of people.

Adequate industrialisation could be an effective means of more employment generation and the best uses of the surplus agricultural production, he said.

The mayor advocated for resolving the existing problems and obstacles so that an industrial environment is ensured, which can encourage more investors from both home and abroad.

Liton also focused on the agricultural potential of the region with special emphasis on value added agro-processing opportunities and agro-based industries.

It could add to the industrialisation efforts of agro-based and agro-processing industries in the region for a sustainable and well-formed linkage of production, processing and marketing, he said.

RCCI President Mohammad Muniruzzaman said the present government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is for establishing more industries in Rajshahi to lessen the pressure on Dhaka.

RCCI Vice President Masudur Rahman and Director Farid Uddin and representative of Fing International Mijanur Rahman were present at the meeting.

SCC starts door-to-door visit to collect tax dues

Tk 100cr accumulated over the years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) has started a special drive to collect Tk 100 crore worth of overdue bills, fees and taxes accumulated in the past 25 years.

The drive was launched on Wednesday, and it will continue for one month.

Three officials are heading as many teams in the field visits. They are SCC Secretary Badrul Alam, Chief Engineer Nur Azizur Rahman and Executive Engineer Ali Akber. Mayor Ariful Haque Chowdhury accompanies them during the drive.

According to the revenue department of SCC, the dues include Tk 67 crore of holding tax, Tk 12 crore of water bills, Tk 20 crore of trade licence fees, and Tk 1 crore of billboard

fees.

Mayor Arif said bills, taxes and fees are the main sources of income of the corporation, and having Tk 1 crore in dues is putting pressure on the organisation. "We repeatedly sent them notices to clear the dues, but they didn't. That's why we have to start the drive," he said.

Shahab Uddin Shihab, public relations officer of SCC, said the three teams along with the mayor visited Zimbazar area yesterday; eventually they will cover all 27 wards of the city.

In the last two days, the teams collected Tk 18 lakh, he said, adding that those who could not pay right away were given a specific timeframe to clear the dues.

SCC earns Tk 50-52 crore yearly in revenue, he said.

Two ASIs arrested for snatching gold from smuggler

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Police arrested two assistant sub-inspectors of police allegedly for trying to snatch gold from a gold smuggler in Sarsha upazila of Jashore on Wednesday evening.

Sharsha police arrested Mamun Reza of Patkelghata Police Station and Ishak of Kolaroa Police Station and two alleged gold smugglers -- ASI Reza's son of Ashik Reza, 20, and one Ashim, 32.

A private car was also seized.

Sheikh Tasmim Alam, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Sharsha Police Station, said one of their police officers saw a scuffle between the two ASIs in plainclothes and Asim at Navaron-Satkhir intersection on Wednesday afternoon, and rushed there.

"On suspicion, the on-duty officer took them to the police station. Later, two gold bars were found with Asim," the police officer said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Govt signs PPP contract for Dhaka Bypass

BSS, Dhaka

A consortium of Chinese companies -- Sichuan Road and Bridge Group, Shamim Enterprise Ltd., and UDC Construction Limited -- has signed a concession contract with the Government of Bangladesh to upgrade the Dhaka Bypass under a public-private partnership (PPP) arrangement.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) acted as financial advisor on the transaction to the Public-Private Partnership Authority (PPPA) of Bangladesh, said an ADB press release yesterday.

This project marks the first successful collaboration between ADB's transaction advisory services and AP3F.

Under the contract signed with the Ministry of Roads and Bridges, a four-lane tollway and a two-lane service road will be

added to the Joydevpur-Debogram-Bhulta-Madanpur Road (N-105) section of the expressway.

The 48km project will provide a major arterial connection between the industrial zone northeast of Dhaka and national highway N1 connecting to Chattogram city, as well as to N2, N3, and N4 highways leading to other major cities.

The consortium will design, build, finance, operate, and maintain the tolled expressway over a 25-year concession period, and will be able to charge tolls based on vehicle type.

"This project brings a new dimension to public service delivery in Bangladesh. It is the first access-controlled expressway in the country," said chief executive officer of PPPA Syed Afsor H Uddin.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

First land-air cargo from Bangladesh leaves India

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The first bonded, cross-border, land-air transshipment from Bangladesh has departed Kolkata airport for Europe, since EFL (Expo Freight Limited) introduced a tailor-made logistics solution to handle such cargo transshipments between the two neighbouring countries.

The EFL offices in Bangladesh and India worked jointly in handling the cargo of apparel items, said a press release of Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi yesterday.

Bangladeshi trucks carrying cargo, weighing 4.1 tonnes, transferred the goods to Indian trucks at Beanpole (Bangladesh)-Petrapole (India) border. From there, the consignment moved to Kolkata

airport. Finally, it was air freighted to reach its final destination.

Through this trial initiative, Kolkata turned out to be a strategic and useful transshipment doorway to Bangladesh for inbound and outbound air transportation.

S Senthilnathan, CEO of Expo Freight Limited Group, said, "We are proud to enrich our ties with Bangladesh through this movement."

"Alternative solutions of this nature will enable us to enhance efficiencies of our logistics operations to promote international trade," Senthilnathan added.

Expo Freight Limited is considering this breakthrough to be instrumental in positively impacting business growth beyond borders.

Rab busts fake currency factory

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members claimed to have busted a factory of manufacturing fake currency notes in Dhaka's Kadamtali area yesterday.

The elite force members arrested a couple and seized around Tk 9 lakh in fake notes, unfinished counterfeit Indian rupees worth around Tk 3 lakh, around one lakh security threads of Indian currency, and fake currency-printing machinery worth Tk 5 crore from their possession, said a press release from the Rab headquarters.

Led by Rab-10 deputy director Maj Md Ashraf Haque, the law enforcers also recovered Tk 50,000 cash and four cell phones.

The arrestees were identified as Sumon alias Sagor, 37, and his wife Husne Ara, 35. They used to live in Natun Rajabari area of Kadamtali.

A case was filed against them with Kadamtali Police Station, said Ashraf Haque.



Outgoing Indian High Commissioner Harsh Vardhan Shringla at a meeting with President Abdul Hamid at Bangabhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: PID



Pedestrians cross the busy roundabout of Mirpur 10, ignoring risks and disrupting the free flow of traffic. The jaywalkers are seen every day although there is a large footbridge overhead, and it has stairs on all four sides. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

People reaping benefits of education system

Says Rashed Khan Menon

BSS, Dhaka

Social Welfare Minister Rashed Khan Menon yesterday said people of the country are now reaping the benefits of development activities of the education system, implemented by the current government.

"BNP destroyed the education system in the country during its tenure... The people of the country are now getting the benefits of development activities of the education system implemented gradually by the current government," he said.

The minister made the remarks at a views-exchange meeting with leaders of Bangladesh Teachers' Association (BTA) at his residence in the city's Minto Road area.

Referring to the misuse of power by BNP to destroy the country's economy, he said Bangladesh made a hat-trick in corruption due to their plundering of wealth.

"Children did not get books timely under BNP's regime... Now the present government has given utmost importance to the education sector," he said, adding that students got new books on the very first day of this year.

With BTA President Azizul Islam in the chair, the meeting was also addressed by BTA General Secretary Mohsin Reza, Secretary of Dhaka Metropolitan Northern Regional Principal Abdul Mannan and T&T College Principal Kazi Kamruzzaman.

Admit Mainul to BSMMU immediately: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to immediately admit Barrister Mainul Hossain to Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) for treatment.

The HC bench of Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed and Justice Md Iqbal Kabir Lytton passed the order following a petition filed by Mainul's wife Sajou Hossain. The petitioner said Mainul is physically ill and he needs to be hospitalised immediately.

Earlier, BSMMU authorities submitted a report to the HC saying that Mainul Hossain is physically unwell, said Advocate M Masud Rana, a lawyer for the petitioner. Mainul is now in Dhaka Central Jail. He is accused in 22 cases and has so far secured bail in six of them.

He was arrested on October 22 in a case filed for defaming journalist Masuda Bhatti on a television talk show. Advocate Khandker Mahbub Hossain appeared for the petitioner.