

Construction of Sonadia sea port hits snag

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fast-track project of the government -- establishment of the country's third deep-sea port proposed at Cox's Bazar's Sonadia -- has plunged into uncertainty.

The existing two ports in Chattogram and Mongla are being upgraded, while construction of two deep-sea ports in Payra and Matarbari is underway. On completion of these, the fifth port would be built at Sonadia, if need be, said Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal yesterday.

"It will take time. If we need that, we will go for that [building Sonadia port]. Until then, these four ports will be good enough at this moment," he said while briefing journalists after a meeting of the cabinet committee on purchase.

The meeting, chaired by the minister, was held at the Secretariat in the capital.

Ten proposals on different public purchases, including recruitment of a consultant for the first terminal of Payra Port in Patuakhali, were approved at the meeting.

Two consultancy firms -- Kunhwa Engineering and Consulting Co. Ltd, based in Korea, and Daeyoung and Heerim (JV) -- will jointly be recruited for the proposal for Payra Port that would involve Tk 79 crore.

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Construction workers look at the collapsed portion of an under-construction building on the campus of Tangail's Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University yesterday. The incident left at least 18 workers injured.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

BHASHANI UNIVERSITY 18 workers wounded in porch collapse

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

At least 18 construction workers were injured in Tangail as a 26-feet tall porch of an under-construction building at Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University collapsed on them early yesterday.

Habibur Rahman, executive engineer of MBSTU, primarily suspected that the incident occurred due to weak centering when the porch was being welded.

Asked about the safety measures of the workers, he said there "might be negligence on the sub-contractor's side".

Prof Sirajul Islam, proctor of the university, said the injured workers were rushed to Tangail General Hospital right after the incident around 12:15am.

Narayan Chandra Saha, superintendent of Tangail General Hospital, said 18 injured workers were taken to the hospital. Of them, three were discharged after giving primary treatment, three were referred to Dhaka as their conditions were deteriorating, and rests were admitted to the hospital.

Abdur Razzak, senior station manager of Tangail Fire Station, said on SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

CU teacher sacked over exam 'forgery'

CU CORRESPONDENT

The Chittagong University authorities have terminated a professor of Sanskrit Department over allegations of forgery in examinations.

Prof Suptikona Mazumder was laid off under 4(1)(F) of CU Employees Statutes for leaking question papers, putting out-of-syllabus questions, and not signing extra scripts in 2013 examinations, read a letter issued by CU Deputy Registrar (administration) Md Shamsul Alam on March 11.

Suptikona, who has been teaching at the university for last 21 years, however, termed the allegation "baseless and false". She also said that she would go on a legal battle after receiving the letter.

Earlier, the university authorities formed a probe committee to investigate Suptikona's involvement in the forgery. The probe committee, headed by SM Salamat Ullah Bhuiyan, found her guilty.

KM Nur Ahmed, CU registrar (acting), said on February 23 this year, Suptikona was asked to explain her role in the forgery before the 520th syndicate meeting of the university.

As her explanation was not satisfactory, the university decided to terminate her, he added.

Earlier, she was temporarily suspended in this connection but the suspension was withdrawn after two hours.

Doubt lingers as conflict flares up

FROM PAGE 1

Commissioner (RRRC) Abul Kalam. Providing formal education to the children could lead to a situation when they would look for jobs and integrate in Bangladesh society. He insists that aid agencies ensure informal education in the refugee camps instead.

UNCERTAINTY OVER REPATRIATION Myanmar signed two deals -- one with Bangladesh in November and another with UNDP and UNHCR in June -- in face of global pressure. It came following the influx of some 750,000 Rohingyas after a brutal military crackdown on them in August 2017.

After a series of discussions, the first batch of 2,260 Rohingyas was supposed to be repatriated in mid-November last year. However, the UN Refugee Agency found them not volunteering to go back.

Refugees told the UN that the situation in Rakhine was not safe and conducive to their return and that there was no guarantee of citizenship. Things have worsened as new conflicts between Myanmar military and Arakan Army (AA) ensued early January when 13 border police officers were killed and nine injured in Rakhine by the AA.

On the latest status of repatriation, Kalam of RRRC said there was no progress; rather it seemed more challenging, given the escalation of conflict in Rakhine.

"We cannot rule out the possibility of [another] Rohingya influx," he told The Daily Star on March 4.

Prof Imtiaz Ahmed of International Relations at Dhaka

University said the Myanmar army had earlier driven out the Rohingyas, and were now attacking the Rakhine Buddhists. "This could be a shrewd technique to prevent Rohingya repatriation."

The Rohingyas want a safe zone under UN supervision in Rakhine and guarantee of citizenship -- demands that Myanmar does not endorse.

Ahmed said the global pressure was also not strong enough to compel Myanmar to take back the Rohingyas by creating secure and conducive conditions in Rakhine. This means repatriation would linger, he added.

WHY EDUCATION, INCOME GENERATION CRUCIAL

According to the Unicef, an estimated 500,000 Rohingya children and young girls and boys aged between 3 and 24 lack access to formal education in the Cox's Bazar camps.

"Some 150,000 children are getting informal education. However, there is no access to secondary education," said Shakil Faizullah, communication manager of Unicef Bangladesh.

A lack of space for schooling in the camps is a real challenge. Besides, there is funding shortages for education as well, he said.

The situation for the adolescents is particularly dire as only four in every 100 have access to any form of education or life-skills and vocational training, said David Skinner, team leader of Save the Children's Rohingya Response.

A lack of income-generating opportunities renders Rohingyas refugees dependent on aid, making them vulnerable to exploitation, Skinner said in a report late February.

Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, head of COAST Trust, a non-profit body working for the Rohingyas, said there was a grave danger of radicalisation if the Rohingyas were not provided with education and income-generating activities. Vested groups could take advantage of their frustration and idle days in the camps, he added.

He said the religiously-conservative Rohingyas should be given education, skills and income-generating opportunity. The authorities need to work on promoting cultural and human values among them, he added.

Kalam said authorities and aid agencies were trying to ensure informal education and skills like sewing and homestead gardening for the refugees. This can reduce their dependence on aid to some extent.

The government and aid agencies are mobilising Rohingya men and women and promoting human and cultural values to address the risks of radicalisation, he noted.

Meanwhile, Chowdhury of COAST said locals felt deprived of their own rights due to the influx.

Rohingyas provide cheap labour in farms around the refugee camps, which is a matter of concern for the local workers, he added.

Locals have been affected by the destruction of forest, which was a big source of income for them, he said.

Chowdhury said food and other supplies required for the Rohingyas are brought from other districts; the government can take initiatives to produce the supplies in Cox's Bazar to help the local economy.

Foreign countries can also invest in Cox's Bazar for productive activities,

which can generate jobs and help local economy -- a proposition that is more sustainable, he added.

PROMOTE LOCALISATION The aid agencies say funding for the Rohingya crisis could dry up and that it is imperative to make the Rohingya response cost-effective.

In the initial plan for September 2017 to February 2018, the appeal for funding was \$434 million, but donors provided around \$400 million. The second appeal last year was for \$950 million, but only \$655 million or 69 percent of it was funded.

Globally, the scenario was even worse. In 2018, the UN asked for a record \$25.2 billion to cover 33 emergencies around the world, but the fund received was slightly more than \$12 billion.

Chowdhury said the solution was to involve locals more in the Rohingya response programme.

He said presently around 1,300 international staff from the UN and international NGOs operate in Cox's Bazar and they use 600 cars every day. The salaries and other expenses are many times higher than that of locals.

"Training of local aid workers and recruiting them in the Rohingya response can drastically cut costs.

Meanwhile, Prof CR Abrar, chair of Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit of Dhaka University, said the perpetrators of atrocities against Rohingyas in Myanmar must face accountability.

"It is high time Bangladesh strongly engage the international community, especially China and India, to ensure that Myanmar does everything for Rohingya repatriation."

Back to the past!

FROM PAGE 16

Lead researcher Dr Gordey Lesovik, who heads the Laboratory of the Physics of Quantum Information at the Moscow Institute of Physics & Technology (MIPT), said: "We have artificially created a state that evolves in a direction opposite to that of the thermodynamic arrow of time."

The "time machine" described in the journal Scientific Reports consists of a rudimentary quantum computer made up of electron "qubits".

A qubit is a unit of information described by a "one", a "zero", or a mixed "superposition" of both states.

In the experiment, an "evolution program" was launched which caused the qubits to become an increasingly complex changing pattern of zeros and ones.

During this process, order was lost -- just as it is when the pool balls are struck and scattered with a cue.

But then another program modified the state of the quantum computer in such a way that it evolved "backwards", from chaos to order.

It meant the state of the qubits was rewound back to its original starting point.

Most laws of physics work both ways, in the future and the past. If you see a video of a pool ball knocking into another one, for instance, and then reverse that same video, the physical processes would both make sense and it would be impossible at the level of physics to know which way around would be correct.

But the universe does have one rule that goes only in one way: the second law of thermodynamics, which describes the progression from order to disorder.

If you saw a video of someone breaking a perfectly arranged triangle of pool balls into a mess, for instance, then watching that backwards would obviously look nonsensical.

The new experiment is like giving the pool table such a perfectly calculated kick that the balls rolled back into an orderly pyramid.

The scientists found that, working with just two qubits, "time reversal" was achieved with a success rate of 85 percent. When three qubits were involved more errors occurred, resulting in a 50 percent success rate.

The experiment could have a practical application in the development of quantum computers, the scientists said.

Call fresh polls or face demo

FROM PAGE 1

A six-member delegation of the students then met the VC at his office to hand over a memorandum. They spoke with him for about 30 minutes to recount all the "irregularities" they found during voting, including the discovery of stashes of ballot papers, both marked and unmarked, from two female halls.

After the meeting, Liton Nandi, the VP candidate of Progressive Student Alliance, told reporters that the VC rejected their demands.

The VC also threatened them with cases if anyone tried to create unrest on the campus, he added.

'NOT POSSIBLE'

The VC later told journalists that a repolling was not possible.

"I can't disregard the time and efforts of the 450 Dhaka University teachers and staff members to make the Ducsu election a success. I have no right to show disregard to their efforts," he said.

He also warned of tough actions against any attempt to disrupt the academic atmosphere.

But Aroni Samonti Khan, leader of the independent panel, asked, "What action has been taken against those who engaged in criminal acts on the campus for the past years?"

"We have given him an ultimatum till Saturday. If our demands are not met, we will intensify our ongoing movement."

I'M ON THEIR SIDE: NUR

Nur, who beat BCL's Rezwanaul Haque Chowdhury Shovon by 1,933 votes,

said he would take oath only if the students wanted him to.

Both Nur, who was once a BCL leader at Mohsin Hall, and Shovon are residents of the hall.

"Despite all sorts of rigging, they [Chhatra League] could not defeat Akhter Hossain and me from my panel. However, they have defeated others implementing a blueprint," he said.

"All organisations except for Chhatra League are pressing for re-election and they are staging demonstrations. They have issued a three-day ultimatum to the vice-chancellor. As their representative, I express my solidarity with their demand.

"I demand re-elections to all Ducsu posts by March 31, scrapping the dubious election."

Earlier in the day, Ruqayyah Hall students staged protests, demanding resignation of provost Zeenat Huda and withdrawal of a case filed against Nur, Liton Nandi and 30-40 others.

Marjuka Raina, a student of Ruqayyah Hall, filed the case for "assaulting" the provost.

Contacted, Zeenat last night said she was pushed by some students during a heated argument on the election day.

HUNGER STRIKE ON: ONE HOSPITALISED

The hunger strike of six DU students demanding a fresh election rolled into the second day yesterday.

One of them, Anindya Mondal of



VP-elect Nurul Haq Nur, middle, and other protesters leave the Dhaka University's vice-chancellor's office after submitting a four-point memorandum, including demand for a fresh Ducsu election schedule. Inset, demonstrators hold a sit-in in front of the building around the same time.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

philosophy department, had to be hospitalised after he fell unconscious in the afternoon.

The six students were continuing the hunger strike at the base of Raju Sculpture near TSC and vowed to continue the protest unless their two-point demand is met.

Initially, four independent candidates who lost the polls began the hunger strike. Two students later joined them.

Meanwhile, five Ruqayyah Hall students began a fast unto death to press home a four-point demand, including reelections to their Hall Sangsad and resignation of the hall provost for her failure to hold a fair election.

The 28-year-long wait for the Ducsu election ended in boycott by all major panels except for the BCL over allegations of irregularities and vote rigging.

Most independent and leftist panels exploded in protests even before the voting ended and are demanding a reelection. They had also called a strike, which was later called off.

The university authorities found proof of vote rigging in Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitree Hall, where several hundred ballot papers were found in a sack. All the ballot papers were marked in favour of the BCL candidates, teachers and students said.

The hall provost was removed from duty following the discovery.

