Govt plans to introduce electric, high speed trains

Says PM, flags off Dhaka-Benapole train

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government has a plan to introduce electric and highspeed trains in the country to make the railway services better and faster.

"We've a plan to generate more electricity as we're now producing 22,000MW ... we'll be able to introduce electric trains in the near future ... we'll set up rail lines for remote areas as well to introduce speedy trains for easier communications," she said.

The PM said this while inaugurating "Benapole Express" for plying between the capital and Benapole and the extension service of Dhaka-Rajshahi nonstop intercity "Bonolata Express" train to Chapainawabganj through a videoconference from the Gono Bhaban.

When the Awami League government came to power, she said, the country had only 1,600MW of electricity generation capacity, but it had now jumped to 22,000MW.

Hasina mentioned that with the introduction of electric and SEE PAGE 8 COL 5



The Benapole Express train that would run between the land port and the capital via Jashore is inaugurated yesterday at the Benapole Railway Station. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the train via teleconference.

РНОТО: STAR

Ctg power plant FROM PAGE 1

on July 8 after the upazila nirbahi officer lodged a complaint over the matter against the plant.

A DoE team later tested the water and found the allegations to be

Muktadir Hasan, assistant director of the Chattogram DoE, told The Daily Star that there were also other pollutants in the water.

"We collected water samples from the spot where a drain from the plant meets the canal. The result was shocking," he added.

The water samples were tested at a DoE laboratory, he added.

The power plant has long been accused of releasing untreated effluents in Morachora.

In 2012, the plant was fined Tk 10 lakh for the same offences. But the fine was waived on the condition that the plant would build its ETP.

The latest investigation also revealed that the plant did not have oil waste separators and there was mismanagement of sludge, which got washed away to the water body during rains.

Shafiuddin Ahmed, managing director of the power plant, denied any wrongdoing.

Sometimes the sludge reservoir overflows a bit and the sludge gets washed away by rain, he said about the DoE findings.

Eminent Halda researcher Prof Manzoorul Kibria said, "The Halda is already a water body in jeopardy. It would be in more danger due to this pollution. The flora and fauna will be damaged if this pollution continues. It's a clear violation of the constitution, which protects biodiversity and environment."

Court frames

FROM PAGE 1

The court also asked Sayedul Haque Sumon, the lawyer who filed the case against Moazzem on April 15, to be present at the trial and narrate the

incident. The tribunal also dismissed the discharge petition submitted by the defence lawyers.

During yesterday's hearing, the defence lawyers said his client recorded Nusrat's statement for the sake of investigation. But his client had not circulated the clip on social media.

The lawyer added that a man named Sajol took the clip from his client's phone without permission

and circulated it. Moazzem's lawyer also said the complainant was not a member of the victim's family and as per law he

had no right to file such a case. The tribunal on June 17 sent

Moazzem to jail in the case. Nusrat, a student of Sonagazi Islamia Senior Fazil Madrasa in Feni,

was set ablaze on April 6 allegedly after refusing to withdraw a case she had filed against her principal, Siraj Ud Doula, for sexually harassing her. She died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital on April 10.

The OC was withdrawn on the same day after Nusrat's family alleged that he had not cooperated with them.

During that time, a video clip of Moazzem asking Nusrat several social media, drawing widespread

humiliating questions went viral on criticism.

Moazzem was suspended on May 8 for negligence in duty. Police later arrested him in the capital's Supreme Court area.

Joint body

FROM PAGE 1

the projects the neighbouring country had agreed to finance was not picking up steam. And the move is slowly but surely bearing fruit.

China and Bangladesh is largely at fault for the snail's pace of progress in the projects, said a finance ministry official.

Bangladesh, the projects must get approval from several committees, which is a long-drawnout exercise. The situation is almost similar in

case of China. For instance, if they do not agree to or fail to understand even a particular word in the project documents, they send the file back to Bangladesh for the process to start anew, mentioned the official. Besides, China's Exim Bank has

some limitations: only a few officials of the bank deal with foreign loans. Also, Chinese firms lobby hard in both the countries to get contracts, causing further delay, the official pointed out.

Furthermore, even after loan investment in Bangladesh. agreements are signed, which is the last step for projects bankrolled by China, funds are released slowly.

that China agreed to finance, five the window to reassess the necessity Padma Bridge rail link, Karnaphuli river tunnel, phase III of the Info-Sarkar project, installation of a singlepoint mooring with double pipeline in Maheshkhali and modernisation of telecommunication network for digital connectivity.

The loan agreements for all five Distribution Company. projects involving \$3.9 billion were signed between October 2016 and April last year, but so far there has been little disbursement of funds.

The signing of the loan agreement for the \$689.35 million-Karnaphuli river tunnel project took place in October 2016, and thus far only \$194.81 million has been released.

Besides in November 2017, the two governments. loan agreement for the \$550.67 million-single point mooring project was signed and only \$82.73 million by this year. has been disbursed so far.

Only \$44.94 million was released modernisation of telecommunication

loan agreement on it was signed in April last year.

In the same month, a loan agreement for the \$2.67 billion-Padma Bridge rail project was struck. Bureaucratic red tape in both And so far \$533.58 million has been disbursed.

> One project which saw fast disbursement is the phase III of the Info-Sarkar project. As of now, \$125.50 million of the agreed \$151.64 million has been released since the signing of the loan agreement in October 2017. Now, the working committee,

> Bangladesh's Economic Relations Division (ERD) and China's commerce ministry, will pinpoint the problems on their respective sides and then work towards removing the holdups. It will review the projects, and

which will include officials from

weigh whether the projects for which loan agreements are yet to be signed still need Chinese funding. The committee will also look to

channel and coordinate private sector

Both sides had agreed to sign the loan agreements for \$20 billion by 2020. But as things stand, the For example, of the 27 projects deadline will not be met, opening

are at the implementation stage: the of the projects, said another finance ministry official. During the PM's China tour, loan agreements involving \$1.76 billion for three projects were signed. Of the amount, \$1.2 billion is for a project to expand and strengthen the power

> Another loan agreement involving \$280.49-million was struck as part of the \$1.12 billion project to strengthen the power grid network under the Power Grid Company of

supply network under Dhaka Power

Bangladesh (PGCB). There was another Chinese grant of \$72.71 million for economic and technical cooperation between the

In total, three loan agreements involving \$3.86 billion will be signed

Those include the remaining loan agreements for the PGCB projects for the \$224.96 million project on and also that for the construction of Dhaka Ashulia Elevated Expressway network for digital connectivity. The involving \$1.15 billion.

Nothing short

FROM PAGE 1

fell victim to the mosquito menace?" A budget is allocated from the taxpayers' money every year to prevent mosquitoes but there is no visible

result, the court observed. The authorities used to spray medicine from plane earlier, but that

is no longer evident, it added. Nurunnahar Akter, lawyer for both DNCC and DSCC, said her clients did

everything to prevent the menace. Fresh tenders have already been floated by both the city corporations to import effective medicines for

preventing mosquitoes. The process will take around six months to finish, she said. The lawyer added that she felt bad

hearing the news of so many deaths for dengue fever.

She also mentioned the awareness programmes undertaken by her clients to stop mosquito breeding and prevent dengue menace.

In response, the court said corrupt people did not feel bad as their children live abroad and not affected by dengue fever.

"Only the parents who lose their children because of dengue can feel

At the hearing, Manzill Murshid, lawyer for the petitioner, told the court that the medicines used to prevent the mosquitoes breeding were ineffective.

the pain," the court added.

Around Tk 20 to Tk 22 crore is allocated for this purpose, but most of it is misappropriated due to corruption, he added.

Meanwhile, the court directed the authorities of DNCC and DSCC to take action against those involved in corruption while purchasing ineffective medicines.

Also, the court ordered the authorities to conduct an enquiry into the mischief and submit separate reports by August 20.

On July 2, the HC bench directed the two city corporations to take effective steps to prevent mosquito menace and control the alarming spread of dengue fever while hearing a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh, a rights organisation.

Pass rate up

FROM PAGE 1

of over 30 percentage points in the pass rate in English as more than 95 percent students of these two boards passed the subject, the results show.

This success pushed up the overall pass rate, said an official.

It's the same with Physics.

The average pass rate in this subject rose by 8.47 percentage points in the eight boards. In Dhaka board, the pass rate in

physics leapt to 95.59 percent from last year's 86.15 percent. This is one of the reasons students from science group did better than those from the two other -- business

studies and humanities groups. Their pass rate stood at 85.57 percent, followed by 73.51 percent in business studies and 65.09 percent in

humanities group. **JUBILATIONS**

The results, published 55 days after the end of the exams, were available in colleges and the websites of the education boards since 2:00pm. Students also got their results through text messages.

Colleges across the country wore a festive look ahead of the results

teachers, students and their guardians behind the success.

Announcing the results at a

crowded press conference at her ministry around 1:00pm, she said, "We have seen some positive signs in all the indicators this year. It is very encouraging for the overall education system. About this year's results, she said

"The students took good preparation and did well. Besides, teachers have been given extensive training and they taught well in the classrooms. These all contributed to the result." She urged the students, who could

not pass, not to get frustrated. "I hope that you will take better preparation with new vigour and succeed. "I request the guardians not to

push their children towards unhealthy competition... Their education will not be meaningful if they don't learn to devote themselves to the wellbeing of others." Earlier in the day, the minister

handed over the copy of the results to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban.

A total of 13,36,629 students --7,03,000 boys and 6,33,629 girls

HSC RESULT CHART

BOARDS	PASS RATE 2019	PASS RATE 2018	GPA-5 2019	GPA-5 2018
RAJSHAHI	76.38	66.51	6,729	4,138
CUMILLA	77.74	65.42	2,375	944
JASHORE	75.65	60.40	5,312	2,089
CHATTOGRAM	62.19	62.73	2,860	1,613
BARISHAL	70.65	70.55	1,201	670
SYLHET	67.05	62.11	1,094	873
DINAJPUR	71.78	60.21	4,049	2,297
TOTAL	71.85	64.55	41,807	25,562

yesterday.

Students and their parents, who had been on their nerves for some time, erupted in jubilation as soon as the results were out.

Some students danced and some showed victory signs. Some took selfies flashing the V-sign. A feeling

of sheer happiness was writ large on their faces. Many students and their parents distributed sweets. "All my wait and worries are gone now. I received the results I expected," said a jubilant Raisa who secured GPA-

5 from a reputed college in the capital. She gave her teachers the credit, saying they taught them very well throughout the year. "I would equally thank my parents for their constant support," she added.

Mohsina Begum, mother of another student named Ishan Rahman, shed tears of joy at her son's success.

"He worked very hard and all his

efforts paid off," she said. Education Minister Dipu Moni attributed the combined efforts of

-- from 8,985 institutions took this year's HSC and its equivalent examinations under the 10 boards. Of them 9,88,172 students passed the tests that began on April 1.

Of the 270 Bangladeshi students who sat for the tests under eight foreign centres, 254 came out successful, making the pass rate 94.07 percent. Twenty-six of them got GPA-5.

Cumilla board topped the charts in terms of success rate with 77.74 percent.

About the reason, the board chairman, Prof Md Abdus Salam, said, "We took several measures. We held workshops at every institution in our board and gave them [teachers] proper guidance.

Chattogram board was at the bottom with 62.19 percent examinee coming out successful.

Like last year, girls did better than boys as their pass rate was 4.77 percentage points higher than that of the male students in all 10 educational boards.

Two killed FROM PAGE 16

Firefighters were informed soon afterwards.

After trying to rescue the "missing people" by removing the debris for hours, firefighters said they could see two motionless bodies under tonnes of rubble near midnight.

Several residents of the area said they heard a thudding noise around 2:00am yesterday. The building might have collapsed at the time, they added.

Seven units of firefighters have been working at the building, said Debashis Bardhan, deputy director of Fire Service and Civil Defence in

Dhaka.

Jayed and his son, who are from Madaripur, had been living in the building for the last eight years, Liton said.

Sahidur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station, also said it appeared that only Jayed and his son lived in the century-old building. Liton said Jayed paid a monthly

rent of Tk 3,000 to a local influential person.

Hazrat Ali, caretaker of market in the area, said Jayed and his son went to their residence after selling fruit until 12:30am.

Girls do better again in HSC

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

For the last five years, girls have been doing better in terms of pass rate in the HSC exams than boys, but the boys have been getting more GPA-5s.

Yesterday's results of the Higher

Secondary Certificate (HSC) and equivalent examinations also show that fewer girls sat for the exams than boys. This year 73.93 percent students

passed the HSC and its equivalent exams under 10 education boards, according to Inter-Education Board Coordination Subcommittee. The pass rate of female students

was 76.44 percent while the rate of male students was 71.67 percent. This year 47,286 achieved GPA-5s and of them 24,576 were boys and

22,710 were girls. Academics said girls were more attentive and had joined more classes

for getting stipend, which paid off. They claimed that boys got preference in getting additional support in the forms of private tuitions, which allowed them to get more GPA-5s.

"Girls are spending more time in studies than boys. They need to attend 70 percent classes to get stipends. This is the reason for their increased pass rate," said former Dhaka education

board chairman Fahima Khatun. "In the adolescent years, boys become more adventurous and their concentration falls short," said Fahima, also former director general of the Directorate of Secondary and

Higher Education.

In 2015, the overall pass rate was 69.60 percent. The pass rate of girls was 70.23 percent and boys 69.04 percent. The same year, 42,894 students achieved GPA-5s and of them 23,293 were boys and 19,601 girls.

Fahima said a large section of parents prefer boys to have additional

education support. Campaign for Popular Education Deputy Director KM Enamul Hoque echoed Fahima but said the parents'

attitude was changing in some areas. Chief of Inter-Education Board Coordination Subcommittee, Prof Ziaul Haque said he could not instantly give reasons as to why girls' did better than boys in pass rates and

the opposite in GPA-5 achieved. "We will carry out a study to know the reason," said Ziaul, also Dhaka Education Board chairman.

French minister resigns after dinner scandal

AFP, Paris

A senior French cabinet minister and close ally of President Emmanuel Macron resigned on Tuesday after reports accused him of extravagant state-funded lobster dinners and misusing public housing in a blow to the centrist government.

Francois de Rugy, who was named environment minister in September 2018, announced his departure after a week of revelations from the leftwing website Mediapart.

"The attacks and media lynching targeting my family force me to take the necessary step back," said de Rugy, who also held the post of minister of state which made him number two in the government after Prime Minister Edouard Philippe.

Transport Minister Elisabeth Borne was appointed as France's new environment minister late Tuesday, the Elysee Palace said, however she will not hold the post of minister of state.

Pyongyang threat AFP, Washington

Korea talks will

go ahead despite

with North Korea, after Pyongyang

warned that US-South Korean military

exercises could affect their planned

hinted it could even reconsider its

moratorium on nuclear testing over

next month's drills, which have been

held for years but were scaled down to

the talks since US President Donald

Trump and North Korean leader Kim

Jong Un agreed to a resumption of

dialogue at an impromptu meeting in

the Demilitarized Zone that divides

statement, the State Department said

it remained upbeat over commitments

made by Kim and Trump during their

June encounter and at a February

hope that no one would try to block, in

their government or our government,

the ability for President Trump and

Chairman Kim to make progress on

the commitments they made to each

other in Vietnam," State Department

spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus told

"From our perspective, we would

Responding to the North's

It was the North's first statement on

ease tensions with Pyongyang.

the two Koreas on June 30.

summit in Vietnam.

reporters.

The North had earlier Tuesday

US hopes N

The United States said Tuesday it hoped to hold denuclearization talks

resumption.