

DGHS' three-year project unfinished in nine years

To seek one-year extension at today's Ecneec meeting

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A project by the health ministry to establish a national institute for laboratory medicine, that was approved in 2010 with a three-year deadline, will be up for approval for a fifth time extension at today's meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec).

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) started the project to build National Institute of Laboratory Medicine and Referral Centre (NILMRC) at Sher-E-Bangla Nagar in the capital in July 2010, with a deadline of June 2013. The aim of the project was to facilitate manpower training in laboratory medicine at hospital and community levels; establishing a network among diagnostic laboratories across the country; be a reference centre for pathology services; provide accreditation for diagnostic labs; offering post-graduate courses and research; and earning revenue.

However, it is yet to complete the project in nine years, and will propose a one-year extension to complete the project at today's Ecneec meeting, according to planning ministry sources.

The initial cost of the project was Tk 138.14 crore, which has been increased by 41 percent to Tk 194.32 crore, with the last deadline expiring in June this year.

A 13-storey building was being built for the institute, which has not yet been handed over to DGHS, according to Prof Dr Shamsuzzaman, fifth project director and first director of the institute.

GK Builders -- owned by disgraced Jubo League leader GK Shamim, who was jailed for his involvement in illegal casino business and other crimes -- is the contractor company for the building, he added.

The deadline for the project was first extended to June 2014, due to "some problems at implementation stage", according to the Ecneec proposal. The deadline was later extended three more years, to June 2017.

Later, budget for the project was increased by 1 percent by amending the project, keeping the same 2017 deadline, which was further extended to June 2019 without changing the budget.

However, according to the latest proposal, there are a number of pending

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Pedestrians wait for an intercity train to pass, so that they can cross the road near Malibagh area. This is an unauthorised rail-crossing, with no warning sign to deter commuters. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

PHOTO OF THE DAY

RASHED SHUMON



A mobile court of Rab yesterday seized 232 hides of different wild animals including leopard and fishing cat from a shop in Paribagh area of Dhaka. The court sentenced two brothers, owners of the shop, to one-year imprisonment each for selling the hides.

FDI increased by 50pc in last fiscal

Cabinet meeting told

AGENCIES, Dhaka

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to the country reached \$3,889 billion during the 2018-19 fiscal, which is 50.73 percent higher than that of the previous fiscal.

The information was revealed in an annual report on activities of the ministries and divisions during the 2018-19 fiscal, which was placed before the cabinet's weekly meeting held at PMO yesterday with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair, reports BSS.

Some \$333.32 million FDI came to Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA) during the 2018-19 fiscal, while employment for 19,548 Bangladeshis was generated in the EPZs under the jurisdiction of BEPZA.

Bangladeshi expatriates sent remittance of \$16.42 billion whereas 6,59,129 Bangladeshi labourers got jobs abroad during the same period, according to the report.

The meeting was apprised that a total of 318 projects were approved in 23 meetings of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec), while Tk 1,66,653 crore were spent against 1,978 projects of the Annual Development Programme (ADP), which was 94.36 percent of the allocation.

Works of 317 projects out of 345 were completed during the 2018-19 fiscal, the report said.

After the meeting, Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Shafiq Alam said, "Three agendas including the annual report have been discussed in the cabinet meeting."

The cabinet also approved a draft of a cultural assistance agreement with Azerbaijan, he said.

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Huji men joining Ansar al Islam: Rab

Four arrested in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As top leaders of banned militant outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad Bangladesh (Huji) are either hanged or behind bars, its operatives are now joining another outfit Ansar al Islam responsible for killing bloggers, writers and free thinkers, a top Rab official said yesterday.

"Huji operatives are now changing their group," said Mozammel Haque, commanding officer of Rab-4, at a press conference at Rab media centre, following arrest of four Ansar al Islam men from the city's Gabtoli and nearby Amin Bazar areas on Sunday night.

The arrestees are -- Mufti Saiful Islam, 34; Salim Mia, 30; Zunayed, 37; and Ahmed Sohayed, 21.

Of them, Saiful and Zunayed were once affiliated with Huji but are now holding important posts in Ansar al Islam, Mozammel said.

The arrestees in preliminary interrogation said they hate the existing government system and want to establish an Islamic law-based system through so-called Jihad, he said.

"They had a plan to kill those they believe are obstacles in their way," the Rab

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BHOLA CLASH

Hefazat-e-Islam to hold nationwide protest today

STAR REPORT

Hefazat-e-Islam yesterday announced a nationwide protest for today to press home their demands, including punishment of the police personnel "responsible for the death of four people" during Sunday's clash in Bhola.

"The demonstration will be held after Zohr prayer tomorrow," Junaid Babunagari, secretary general of Hefazat-e-Islam, said at a press conference yesterday at Al Jamiatul Ahliya Darul Ulum Moinul Islam Madrasa premises in Chattogram's Hathazari.

Their demand also includes punishment of the person who put the hate-post on Facebook and compensation for the families of those who were killed and injured during the clash.

Babunagari warned that a "tough movement will be announced" if those responsible are not punished.

He claimed Hefazat conducted

an investigation after the Bhola incident, and found that it was done deliberately by the owner of the Facebook account and that "the account was not hacked".

"We are forming a five-member probe body to conduct further investigation into the issue," he added.

His statement, however, contradicted police version as law enforcers found that the youth's Facebook account had indeed been hacked and detained two persons involved in the hacking.

At yesterday's press conference, the Hefazat leader said that such an incident would not have occurred had the government accepted their previous 13-point demand that includes death penalty for criticising Islam and its Prophet (PBUH).

At least four people were killed and more than a hundred injured on Saturday as zealots clashed with police in Bhola's Borhanuddin upazila over a hate-post spread through Facebook

and Facebook Messenger.

Meanwhile, Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat Bangladesh's Dhaka north and south units yesterday demanded that the government enact blasphemy law to ensure highest punishment to those involved in insulting Islam.

Leaders of the religious group came up with the demand at a protest rally and human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club.

Around 60 leaders and activists from madrasas in the city participated in the programme.

Devotees in the city's Mohammadpur area yesterday blocked the road in front of Allah Karim Mosque around 10am, protesting the deaths in Bhola and insult of the Prophet (PBUH).

Traffic movement remained interrupted for over two hours until they vacated the area around 12:15pm, police said. The protestors shouted slogans against police and

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Sonargaon recognised as World Craft City



Bangladesh Folk Art and Crafts Foundation operates from the exquisite building of Sonargaon Museum. Below, a weaver creates Jamdani pieces at the foundation's workshop.

PHOTO: STAR

SANAD SAHA

Sonargaon in Narayanganj has been given the status of a 'World Craft City' for Jamdani, following an appeal from Bangladesh National Crafts Council to World Crafts Council to recognise the city's immense contribution to the craft of Jamdani.

This announcement will bring new possibilities for the artisans and their age-old craft, hoped representatives of National Crafts Council (NCC). They said this will help improve the living standards of the artisans.

According to NCC sources, they have been working to develop Sonargaon's Jamdani sector for the past two years. Last January, NCC sent an application to WCC to declare Sonargaon as the 'City of Jamdani'.

On September 5 this year, a representative team from WCC visited the Jamdani industry in Sonargaon.

Later, representatives of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs;

Education Minister Dipu Moni; Narayanganj City Corporation Mayor Selina Hayat Ivy; the district administrator; upazila nirbahi officer, and Bangladesh

NCC. The council's executive member Chandra Shekhar Saha said they will organise a press conference soon to reveal more details.



Folk Art and Crafts Foundation in Sonargaon also vouched for the industry.

On October 8, WCC sent the official declaration via email to

According to Bangladesh Folk Art and Crafts Foundation in Sonargaon, 23 out of 485 villages in the upazila have a significant

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ACC files cases against GK Shamim, Khalid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed a case against contractor SM Golam Kibria Shamim and his mother for amassing Tk 297.08 crore wealth beyond the known source of income.

The commission filed another case against expelled Jubo League Dhaka South Organising Secretary Khalid Mahmud Bhuiyan for amassing Tk 5.58 crore illegally.

On September 18, Rab arrested Khalid for operating a casino. Two days later, Shamim was arrested from his Niketon residence. They were later sent to jail in separate cases.

Yesterday, ACC Deputy Director Md Salahuddin filed the case against Shamim with its Dhaka office.

According to the case statement, Shamim amassed immovable property worth Tk 50 crore and movable property

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Art lovers bid farewell to Kalidas Karmakar

UNB, Dhaka

Internationally acclaimed artist, painter and printmaker Kalidas Karmakar, who passed away on Friday, was cremated in the capital yesterday after people from all walks of life paid their last respects.

His cremation took place at Baredeswari Kali Temple in the city's Sabujbagh area around 2pm, said Sourav Chowdhury, executive artistic manager of Gallery Cosmos.

Earlier, many paid tributes to the Ekushey Padak-winning artist at Dhaka University and Central Shaheed Minar.

His body was taken to Dhakeshwari National Temple from Birdem Hospital's mortuary around 9am.

From there, it was taken to the Faculty of Fine Arts building of Dhaka University where thousands of people, including artists, paid their last tributes.

Kalidas' body was then taken to Central Shaheed Minar around 11am where artists, university and organisation authorities, and his fans and followers paid their respects.

Cosmos Group authorities paid their emotional tributes to the lifelong friend and adviser of Gallery Cosmos and Cosmos-Atelier 71.

Kalidas suffered a cardiac arrest at his Eskaton residence around 1:30pm on Friday and was immediately taken to Labaid Specialised Hospital where doctors pronounced him dead around 2pm.

The body had been kept at Birdem Hospital's mortuary as his two daughters -- Kanka Karmakar and Keya Karmakar -- had been in the US.