

GAS SUPPLY TO RANGPUR

Pipeline installation work to start next month

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

Installation of pipeline to supply gas to Rangpur will start from January next year with an aim to explore the industrial sector in the region.

The around Tk 1,800 crore project is expected to be completed in June 2022.

During her visit in 2011, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina pledged to ensure gas supply to the division through pipeline -- a long standing demand of residents.

Shailaja Nanda Basak, deputy general manager (planning) of Pashchimanchal (western) Gas Company Limited (PGCL), revealed the information at a meeting with industrialists of the region on Monday afternoon at the office of Rangpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI).

PGCL is a concern of state-run Petrobangla.

He said the work will start from Bogura then to Rangpur and surrounding areas of Piganj and Nilphamari.

A supply network will also be built by Gas Transmission Company Limited (GTCL) in consultation with Investment Facilitation Company (IFC).

Mostafa Hossain Ripan, acting president of RCCI, presided over the meeting. He said gas is the prerequisite for promoting industries.

In their speech, industrialists thanked the prime minister for the initiative and said many potential industrialists have purchased plots on both side of Dinaipur-Rangpur Highway in last couple of years to set up factories. But they could not do so for not having gas supply, they added.

They also urged the government to extend the pipeline up to the proposed economic zone in Mohipur (around 1,000 acres) of Gangachhara upazila of Dinaipur.

The deputy general manager said they are assessing the number of functional and potential industries, and the amount of gas needed in this regard.

10 to die for murder of M'singh pharmacy owner

JNU CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced 10 people to death for killing pharmacy owner Mazharul Islam Paltan in Mymensingh's Nandail 12 years ago.

Judge Abu Zafar Md Kamruzzaman of Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 in Dhaka announced the judgement.

The court also acquitted seven accused from the charges, as their involvement in the crime was not proved.

Of the 10 convicts, Eklash Uddin, Abul Kashem Fakir, Kabir Miah, Abul Kashem, Abul Kalam Azad, Chandan, Shukkur Ali and Badal Miah are behind bars, while Faruk Miah and Ruma Akhter are absconding.

According to case documents, drug store owner Mazharul Islam Paltan was killed inside his shop at Shialdhara Bazar in Mymensingh at some point between February 28 and March 1, 2007.

Beauty Akhter, younger sister of Paltan, filed a murder case against unknown persons with Nandail Police Station on March 1 that year.

Police submitted the charge sheet to the court against 18 people in July 2008. As accused Jabbar Mohari died during the proceedings, his name was dropped from

the case.

Thirty prosecution witnesses gave their statements before the court.

Two accused -- Ruma Akhter and Faruk Miah -- gave confessional statements to the court, but later went into hiding after securing bail, said Special Public Prosecutor Abu Abdullah Bhuiyan.

According to the statements, Ruma, a sex worker, engaged in sexual activities with the accused in Paltan's shop on night of the incident.

But when they refused to pay Ruma for her services, she started putting pressure on Paltan for the money, he said.

At one stage, an altercation broke out between Paltan and Ruma when he [Paltan] refused to pay. The accused got involved later and beat Paltan to death, the SPP added.

Meanwhile, the prosecution also expressed satisfaction with the judgement.

However, Sanaul Alam Rifat, younger brother of convict Kabir Miah, told The Daily Star that his brother was not involved with the incident.

"We did not get the justice in the case," he said.

Advocate Muhibbur Rahman Mahboob, a defence lawyer, said that they would appeal to the higher court against the judgement.

Last trace of Ritwik Ghatak in Rajshahi being erased



This is what remains of renowned filmmaker Ritwik Ghatak's home, right, as authorities of a homeopathic college are demolishing it for constructing a garage, bottom left. This brazen move is being protested by people from all walks of life, who formed a human chain in Rajshahi city yesterday, top right.

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Authorities of a homeopathic college are gradually demolishing the ancestral home of internationally renowned filmmaker Ritwik Ghatak in Rajshahi city's Miapara area, sparking protests from social and cultural activists across the country.

Several hundred locals under the banner of Ritwik Ghatak Film Society formed a human chain at Shaheb Bazar Zero Point in the city yesterday afternoon, demanding immediate protection of the property bearing the filmmaker's memories.

They called for declaring it a heritage site and establishing a memorial museum on the premises as done with legendary actress Suchitra Sen's ancestral house in Pabna.

They submitted memorandums to the deputy commissioner of Rajshahi, city Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton, lawmaker Fazle Hossain Badsha and Cultural Affairs Minister KM Khalid highlighting their demands.

However, the authorities of Rajshahi Homeopathic College and Hospital denied that they are demolishing Ritwik's house.

"The construction materials we found during demolition are modern, but Ritwik lived in Rajshahi in the 1930s or '40s," Anisur Rahman, principal of the college, said.

During a visit to the site yesterday

afternoon, this correspondent saw that the college authorities had already demolished part of the one-storey house and erected a boundary wall in the western side of the site.

The principal said the demolition started as the institute's governing body -- headed by the deputy commissioner of Rajshahi -- decided to build a garage for vehicles there.

He said the property belongs to the college and the authorities needed to demolish the old structure -- making way for new classrooms and academic buildings.

"We couldn't demolish all parts of the building due to financial constraints," the principal said. He said the college was set up at the site on 34-decimal land in 1966.

In 1989, the Ershad government handed over the land -- classified as "enemy property" -- to the college. In 2006, the authorities demolished the northern part of the old building and erected a two-storey building.

On the south and eastern part of the site, the old building still survives.

"The surviving part of the building bears memories of Ritwik Ghatak," Ahsan Kabir Liton, president of Rajshahi Film Society, said.

He said the college authorities destroyed most of Ritwik's ancestral house over the last decade and nothing was done to stop this.

Born in Dhaka on November 4, 1925,

Ritwik had to move to Rajshahi as his father Suresh Chandra Ghatak -- a district magistrate, poet and playwright -- was transferred to the city.

Ritwik's father owned the building. Formative years of the filmmaker's life were spent at the house, as he studied at Rajshahi Collegiate School. During his stay in the city, Ritwik edited a magazine called "Avidhara".

He took part in meetings and cultural gatherings with litterateur Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay at the premises of Miapara Public Library, adjacent to the house.

Renowned fiction writer Mahasweta Devi -- Ritwik's niece -- also stayed at the house, Mahmud Islam Masud, general secretary of Ritwik Ghatak Film Society, said. "On different occasions, we invited Ritwik's sister Protiti Devi and Mahasweta Devi to Rajshahi and they fondly recalled their memories of living in the house," he said.

During the 1947 partition, Ritwik had to migrate to India with his family and the authorities later declared his ancestral home "enemy property" [now vested property].

Yesterday, Md Shariful Haque, additional deputy commissioner of Rajshahi, told journalists that they have instructed the college authorities to stop the work for now. "We'll take a decision in this regard soon."

PHOTO: COLLECTED

PHOTO OF THE DAY

RAJIB RAIHAN

Follow alternative resolution system

Law minister urges district judges to reduce backlog of cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All pending cases cannot be disposed of amid the current rush of filing unless those are settled outside courts, said Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday.

In this regard, he urged the district judges to follow alternative dispute resolution (ADR) system in a bid to reduce a huge backlog of pending cases.

The law minister was speaking as chief guest at a conference in Dhaka for the district judges on strengthening the government legal aid service and good governance.

National Legal Aid Services Organization (NLASO) under the law ministry organised the event at InterContinental hotel.

A total of 19,018 cases were disposed of through ADR in last few years, said the law minister, adding that the rate of such disposal must be increased.

Anisul Huq said the government has been continuing legal aid activities across the country through forming legal aid committees at all the districts to ensure the access to justice for all the citizens by 2030.

He said realisation of the spirit of Liberation War and the dream of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and the goal for sustainable development depend on the success of government legal aid functions.

Law Secretary Md Golam Sarwar told the event that NLASO has so far provided legal aid to 4,78,858 justice seekers since 2009 and collected Tk 28.85 crore as compensation through ADR.

Acting director of NLASO AHM Habibur Rahman Bhuiyan presided over the conference where deputy resident representative of UNDP Bangladesh Van Nguyen also spoke.

Dr Sabur Khan board member of WBAF's commission

CITY DESK

Dr Md Sabur Khan -- chairman of Daffodil International University and Daffodil Family, and high commissioner of World Business Angels Investment Forum (WBAF), Bangladesh -- has been appointed as one of the global board members of WBAF's Science, Technology and Innovation Commission.

Dr Nisreen El-Hashemite, founder and president of Women in Science International League, will chair the board consisting of nine board members. WBAF recently made the appointment announcement, said a press release.

The commission aims to connect innovators with smart finance, help inventors commercialise their creations, foster creative thinking through open learning and skill development, and

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Kushtia intercity train runs over two

UNB, Kushtia

Two people were crushed under the wheels of a train at Kursha in Mirpur upazila of Kushtia early yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Kawsar (35) and Mohibul (40) of Bashinagar village of the district.

The accident occurred as the two were cross the rail track on a trolley. They died when an intercity train hit them from the side, leaving them dead on the spot, Jashim Uddin, officer-in-charge of Poradaha GRP Police Station said.

Upon information, police went to the spot and recovered the bodies, he added.

Road crashes claim nine lives

STAR REPORT

Nine people were killed in separate road accidents across five districts in the last two days, report our correspondents and a news agency.

Two minors, Mintu Biswas (12) and Happy Biswas (10), were killed when an army vehicle lost control after a tyre puncture and hit them on Dhaka-Chattogram highway at Nurmanikhar in Debidwar upazila in Cumilla around 1:30pm yesterday, police told our Cumilla correspondent. Two others were also injured in the accident.

The bodies were handed over to the families, while the injured were admitted to Chandina Upazila Health Complex, said Monirul Islam, in-charge of Elliotganj highway police outpost.

In Chattogram, a local leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) was killed and his friend was injured when their motorcycle overturned on Hafez Bazlur Rahman Road in Raozan upazila, reports UNB.

The deceased was identified as Sajib Mutsuddi (19), a student of Imam Gazzali University College. He was the finance secretary of Pahartali union unit of BCL.

Rokon Uddin, chairman of Pahartali Union Parishad,

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PEC, Ebtedayee, JSC, JDC results on Dec 31

UNB, Dhaka

The results of Primary Education Completion (PEC), Ebtedayee, Junior School Certificate (JSC) and Junior Dakhil Certificate (JDC) examinations will be published on December 31.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will also inaugurate distribution of free textbooks among students for 2020 on the day, said Badrul Hasan Babul, additional secretary to the primary and mass education ministry.

The results will be handed over to the prime minister in the morning.

Later, Education Minister Dr Dipu Moni and State Minister for Primary and Mass Education Md Zakir Hossain will officially announce the results through separate press briefings at their ministry offices, Badrul said.

Female-friendly toilets sought at edu institutions

'Elimination of Inequalities in Sanitation' workshop held in port city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Many schools and colleges in Chattogram don't have female friendly toilets and sanitation facilities. This forces female students to miss classes during their menstruation period, as they don't want to use unhygienic toilets, speakers said at a programme yesterday.

They were speaking at a workshop titled "Elimination of Inequalities in Sanitation" held at the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), Chattogram organised by Dushtha Shasthya Kendra (DSK).

The speakers emphasised the need to set up female friendly toilets in all educational institutions across the port city.

Sumon Roy, executive engineer of DPHE, Chattogram, said, "It is the responsibility of DPHE

to establish toilets in all primary schools of the country located outside city corporations," adding, "We will ensure water sanitation and hygiene in all primary schools of the country by the next five years."

He aligned the workshop's theme with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), saying "ensuring clean water and sanitation is a key focus of the SDGs."

However, government organisations cannot achieve this goal alone, he added, urging social and non-government organisations to come forward and play a vital role.

Abida Azad, a ward councillor of Chattogram City Corporation (CCC), said students don't want to risk infections and other diseases by using the

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