

DHAKA CIRCULAR RAIL WORTH THE INVESTMENT?

South Korean consortium starts study to decide on funding

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

A South Korean consortium has started its study to assess whether it would invest on a project for building a circular railway around the capital, under a public private partnership (PPP) initiative.

Apart from technical and financial feasibility studies, it would also prepare a step-by-step plan on how to progress with the project and which portion of the railway should be prioritised, officials said.

Operations of the study started in October and will take nine months to complete, they added.

Representatives of the consortium took part in a meeting with Bangladesh Railway (BR) officials on Monday and shared different aspects of the project.

The development came after BR completed a feasibility study for building the circular railway to ease traffic congestion on city roads.

The project, which the railway study



says will take six years to complete and is estimated to cost USD 8.37 billion, is likely to provide more efficient commutes both for people in the capital and those from surrounding

districts coming into the city.

However, some transport experts found the project highly ambitious, saying that its effectiveness depends

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Over the years, Chattogram's Ananda Bazar has become a hub for discarded plastic products. Gathered from all across the city, they are processed and exported to countries like China and Turkey, for reuse and recycling. Amidst the looming threat of the climate crisis, this is a step towards addressing environmental concerns, which also creates an alternative way to earn foreign currencies along the way. This photo was taken on Sunday. PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

1,603 incidents of sexual violence in October alone

Says BMP report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 1,603 reports of torture and sexual violence against women and girls were recorded in October, according to Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP).

A total of 101 rape incidents were reported in this period; in 41 of these incidents, the victims were girl children. Three girls were gang-raped, and four were murdered after the rape, according to a press release issued by Mahila Parishad.

The organisation compiled the data from 13 national dailies in the country -- The Daily Star, The Independent, New Age, The Daily Observer, The Daily Prothom Alo, The Daily Kaler Kontho, The Daily Ittefaq, Sangbad, The Daily Janakantha, Bhorer Kagoj, Samakal, Jugantar and Bangladesh Pratidin.

Seven women, including two girls, faced rape attempts while nine women and girls were subjected to sexual harassment.

A total of 1,257 girls were married off last month while only seven child marriage incidents were prevented.

According to the rights organisation's report, 51 women were murdered in October alone, including 12 girls, while 16 faced attempts to murder. Twenty three women,

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Preventing the next outbreak

Experts weigh in on tackling zoonotic diseases

MOUJID AHMED SUJAN

After the avian influenza virus, popularly known as bird flu, first broke out from Biman Poultry Complex in Dhaka's Savar on March 15, 2007, over 16 lakh chickens, raised in commercial farms across the country, died during the following year.

Due to the virus's spread, hundreds of poultry farms in 47 districts were shut down, causing unemployment and losses of around Tk 4,500 crore, according to different estimates.

The disease is one of 41 prioritised emerging and re-emerging zoonotic diseases in the country, according to 2018 data of the US Center for Disease Control.

Zoonotic diseases are naturally transmissible from vertebrate animals to humans. They are caused by harmful germs like viruses, bacteria, parasites, and fungi.

The zoonotic diseases that have been detected in the country so far include dengue, chikungunya, Zika, Nipah, swine flu, anthrax, rabies, HIV, and Covid-19, the latest example of a global public health emergency.

"Although zoonotic diseases do not cause problems frequently, they can cause epidemics. So there is no alternative to surveillance," said Dr Sukanta

ONE HEALTH APPROACH

» An approach to designing, implementing events, policies, legislation, research via collaboration



» Tackles issues like zoonotic, vector-borne, chronic diseases, antibiotic resistance, food safety, mental health

» One Health activities started in country in 2008

» 12 research labs brought under surveillance

» More integrated surveillance, monitoring of infectious diseases needed

» Lack of infrastructure, skilled human resources key challenges

Chowdhury, associate scientist of emerging infections at icddr, b's Infectious Diseases Division.

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Money laundering must not be taken lightly, says SC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday observed that money laundering is a serious financial offence nowadays, and therefore, it cannot be taken lightly.

With this observation, the apex court scrapped the High Court orders that granted bail to Joy Gopal Sarkar, general secretary of Dhaka Wanderers Club, in four money laundering cases. He allegedly had links to illegal casino business.

The Appellate Division of the SC also directed the trial courts concerned to finish the cases' trial proceedings in the next one year.

A five-member full bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain passed the orders following four petitions filed by the state, challenging the HC's bail orders.

Additional Attorney General Sk Md Morshed represented the state while lawyer Momtaz Uddin Fakir appeared for Joy Gopal during virtual hearing on the petitions.

Following the petitions filed Joy Gopal, the HC on August 19 granted bail to him.

Joy Gopal was arrested on July 14 last year in connection with five money laundering cases filed with different police stations, on various dates in 2019 and 2020. Later, another case was filed against him on August 31 last year.



As the surge in food prices continues, the slump in demand has started to hit sellers of all kinds -- from wholesalers to the street-side vendor. One such seller, who buys leftover vegetables from Karwan Bazar's wholesalers and sells them at half price by the streets of Tejgaon, was found taking a nap in the middle of the day. With customers free and far between, what else could she even do? This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

We're embarrassed

Says CEC on violence centring UP elections

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) is embarrassed about the violence that took place during the Union Parishad elections, said Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda yesterday.

He said the EC will provide directions to field-level workers, after consultation with election commissioners to prevent further violence.

"We are embarrassed that many [violent] incidents took place. We are also concerned," said Nurul Huda at his office in the capital's Agargaon, while responding to a reporter's query.

He, however, said that they have control over the situation on the ground.

"Whenever we get complaints, we take action. Even then, criminal activities occur. These events are not premeditated; they happen suddenly," he added.

Regarding the allegation that candidature of several people were accepted in Shariatpur, even though signatures were forged, Nurul Huda said an inquiry committee, headed by a joint secretary of

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'True democracy can protect journalists'

Speakers on ending violence against journos

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pointing out that true democracy paves the way for objective journalism and ensures security, speakers at a discussion yesterday said journalists need to work together to establish true democracy in the country.

They opined that good journalism is the only way to counter violence and crimes against journalists.

They said this at a discussion titled "Countering Threats of Violence and Crimes against Journalists" organised by the EMK Center in the capital.

The discussion was held to mark "International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists".

Shafiqul Alam, bureau chief at AFP, said law cannot protect a journalist. "For instance, if I formulate a law to protect journalists, someone will also formulate another law to counter it," he said.

Besides, when the implementing agency becomes politically motivated, law does not work, he observed.

"That's why true democracy is necessary. If we can reach a situation where true democracy prevails, we'll be protected," said Shafiqul.

Journalist Ariful Islam Regan gave a description of brutal assault on him by former deputy commissioner of Kurigram Sultana Pervin and three of her colleagues.

"They broke into my house and took me away at midnight. I was undressed and beaten at the DC's office... I was threatened of cross-fire," he said.

"My children and I are still reeling from trauma whereas the government

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8 killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

Seven people were killed and three others injured in road accidents in three districts during the last two days, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Cumilla, a newspaper-carrying microbus driver was killed as an unidentified vehicle from behind hit the microbus that eventually rammied a covered van ahead of it on Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Paduarbazar area yesterday, said police.

Liton (55) from Dubachail village in Nabinagar upazila succumbed to his injuries at a hospital, Brahmanbaria, said Mainamati Highway Police Station Sub-inspector Khorshed Alam.

In another incident, a CNG-run auto-rickshaw passenger and a couple were killed when a bus hit the vehicle on Cumilla-Noakhali regional highway at Bipulashar in Manoharganj yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as Saima Muntaha (22), Ruhul Amin (65), and his wife Sefali Akhter (55), said Laksham Highway Police Station Officer-in-Charge Maqsood Ahmed.

In Patuakhali, a teenager was killed and three others were injured after their two motorcycles collided head-on on Payra Bridge in Lebukhali area on Monday, said

police.

Raihan (15), son of Lutfar Rahman Shahriar and an eighth-grader of Patuakhali Government Jubilee High School, died on the way to Dhaka for better treatment from Patuakhali at night, said Patuakhali Police Station OC Moniruzzaman.

The injured were taken to Patuakhali Medical College Hospital.

In Myemensingh, two brothers including a university student were killed when a Mymensingh-bound covered-van knocked their motorbike from behind on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway at Kazir Shimla in Trishal upazila yesterday morning.

Firoz Morshed (35), a ceramic factory worker in Gazipur, and his younger brother Towhidul Islam (24), a masters student at Chattogram University, from Kharkharia village in Nandina, Jamalpur, died on the spot, said Trishal Police Station OC Mohammad Mainuddin. Police detained the covered-van driver. A case was lodged with the police station.

In Faridpur, Nosimon driver Murad Biswas (23) died instantly as his potato-laden vehicle overturned on a road at Hamidi in Boalkhali yesterday.

Police said the vehicle's axle suddenly broke down around 11am, causing the accident.

Boy dies as double-decker hits him in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 12-year-old boy was killed after a double-decker bus ran him over as he was helping his father to pull a van in Dhaka's Mohakhali area yesterday morning.

The deceased -- Md Roni, a madrasa student -- used to live at Sat Tola slum in the area.

As the boy was pushing the van from behind, under the Mohakhali flyover, a double-decker BRTC bus hit the van around 11:30am -- causing Roni to fall on the ground.

The double-decker later ran him over, said Waliullah, Roni's father, who survived with minor injuries.

Roni was rushed to

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As the shopping malls in the capital's Elephant Road area are closed on Tuesdays, a number of sellers open "shop" on their stairways. They sell everything from trousers to jackets, collected from various shops and factories, at a cheaper price, always attracting a good crowd. This photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON