

Railway goes for additional revenue stream

Signs contract with private company to build mall, hotel in the port city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway yesterday signed a contract with a local private company to construct a shopping mall and a hotel/guest house in Chattogram, with the aim to increase its income.

The project will be implemented under Public-Private Partnership basis on 0.452 acres of railway land near Chattogram Railway Station. This is the second project of BR to be implemented under PPP.

Ahsan Jabir, BR's additional chief engineer (bridge), and Anwar Hossain, director of Chattogram-based developer Epic Properties Ltd, signed the contract at Rail Bhaban.

The government has plans to implement 30 percent of the development projects under PPP, said Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan at the programme.

This is also the second PPP project to reach this stage.

As per the contract, the private partner will develop at least 40,000 square feet of land within the next four years, investing Tk 45.24 crore. The plan includes a 15-storey building for the shopping mall, hotel, movie theatre, and convention and recreation centre.

The partner would hand over 10,000 square feet of developed land to BR. The land will be handed over after 40 years, during which the private partner would pay a certain amount to BR from the project operations.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs



At Jatrabari end of the Hanif flyover, near the toll plaza, stairs were setup at this pocket gate to aid pedestrians' movement. But the spot falls right in the middle of a busy street, which should be no place to cross the road or use as a bus stop. Moreover, the stairs are steep and narrow, and come without railings, which makes the entire endeavour quite risky. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Proposed design of the Railway Emporium

approved the project in 2013. Later, BR selected the company in 2019 through international bidding.

However, the signing got delayed due to the pandemic. BR's Director General Dharendra Nath Mazumder said the railway's operation cost exceeds its income. "It is difficult for the government to provide continuous support. So, we are implementing the PPP," he added.

Rail secretary Humayun Kabir said BR is currently working on 12 PPP projects. Contracts have been signed for two of them. Earlier in March 2020, BR signed a contract with United Enterprises and Co Ltd, to establish a 500-bed hospital and 100-seat medical college in Chattogram. As per the contract, the company has to operationalise at least a 250-bed hospital within the next three years, while an additional 250 beds will be added within next two years.

However, it came to a halt as various organisations demanded a shift of the site from Railway Building area for environmental concerns.

Asked, the minister said they cannot cancel the contract without the PM's approval as they signed it following all relevant procedures.

"The contract is still valid," he added.

PRAYER TIMING JAN 12			Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
		Azan	5-30	12-45	4-00	5-36	7-00
		Jamaat	6-05	1-15	4-15	5-40	7-30
		SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION					

Teacher dies in Dhamrai road accident

STAR REPORT

A school teacher was killed when a truck hit an auto-rickshaw in Batulia area in Dhaka's Dhamrai upazila on Monday night.

The deceased is Kamrunnahar (53). She was an assistant teacher of Kantahati Government Primary School.

"The accident took place on Kalampur-Saturia road last night. Kamrunnahar was seriously injured when an unidentified truck hit an auto-rickshaw carrying her. Later, locals rescued her and took her to Savar's Enam Medical College and Hospital, where the on-duty doctor declared her dead," said AKM Saiduzzaman, sub-inspector of Dhamrai Police Station. Her body was handed over to her family yesterday morning.



Coconut flower has many names across the country. But the taste that it offers after being cooked as curry is undisputable. Vendors sell them across the capital on vans, charging different amounts for different sizes -- ranging from Tk 20 to Tk 40. This young woman was seen buying some from a vendor near Central Shaheed Minar area of the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Recognition through CONSTITUTION

Speakers urge govt to ensure rights of indigenous people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should provide constitutional recognition to the indigenous people and take special measures for their economic, social and cultural development, urged the Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous Peoples and Minority Affairs at a discussion yesterday.

The caucus also demanded to enact legislation in light of International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 107 (Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention, 1957) and ratify ILO Convention 169 (Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989) as promised in the five-year plan.

The discussion, titled "The Role of ILO Conventions 107 and 169 in Protecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of Bangladesh" was jointly organised by the Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous Peoples and Minority Affairs and Development Research Collective (RDC), in association with ILO and Indigenous Peoples Development Services (IPDS) at the capital's The Daily Star Centre.

According to the caucus, it is important to ensure maximum coordination of the local government in ensuring the ancestral, customary, wetlands and forestry rights of the indigenous people. It also recommended that issues related to the development and land rights of the indigenous people be discussed in a special session of the parliament.

IPDS president Sanjeeb Drong, also general secretary of Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples

The issues of indigenous people's rights should be discussed not only outside but also inside the parliament.

Lawmaker
RASHED KHAN MENON

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Enacting legislation according to ILO Convention 107
- Ratifying ILO Convention 169
- Discussing issues of development, land rights in parliament
- Introducing separate land, minority commissions
- Introducing anti-discrimination act

Forum, presented the keynote at the event.

"During the Liberation War, we pledged and fought to ensure equality, human dignity and social justice for the people of Bangladesh. But more than 30 lakh indigenous people of the country have not progressed as much after 50 years of independence," he said.

Lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon, founding member of the caucus, who presided over the programme virtually, said the issues of indigenous rights should be discussed not only outside but also inside the parliament.

He sought the cooperation of all to enact the indigenous rights act, separate land commission for indigenous people, a minority commission and anti-discrimination act in the parliament.

"We have ratified Convention 107, and as a modern state, it is our responsibility to ratify Convention 169," said Lawmaker RAM Obaidul Muktaadir Chowdhury.

Dhaka University Prof Mesbah Kamal, Prothom Alo joint news editor Sohrab Hossain, ILO representative Alexius Chicham, Daily Samakal advisory editor Abu Sayeed Khan, among others, spoke at the event moderated by Jannat Ferdousi Lucky.

'Justice for Kanchon Mia' Documentary on RMG worker wounded at protest released

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A documentary titled "Chhutir Charra (Pellets for Holidays)" on RMG worker Kanchon Mia, who was badly wounded after being shot with pellet guns during a protest, was released and displayed at the capital's Drik Gallery yesterday.

The documentary shows how Kanchon, a worker of an RMG factory owned by conglomerate Ha-Meem Group, was denied justice and compensation after becoming incapacitated for life for the "crime" of attending a legitimate protest on March 10, 2021.

Instead of meeting their demands for Eid holidays,

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'Not prepared enough'

GM Quader on govt effort to stop Omicron spread

STAR REPORT



Jatiya Party chairman GM Quader yesterday said the government is not well prepared to deal with the highly-contagious omicron variant of Covid-19.

GM Quader, also deputy leader of the parliament, said the country is still lacking sufficient ICU facilities, urging the government to ensure such facilities at upazila health complexes.

He said this while speaking with journalists at Rangpur Circuit House, after arriving there for a four-day visit to his constituency.

He said the country's unemployment problem reached an extreme level. Millions of people are still unemployed. Besides, law and order situation is also deteriorating, he alleged.

Covid restrictions to foil BNP rallies?

Questions Rizvi

UNB, Dhaka

BNP has expressed doubt over whether the government has imposed fresh restrictions, including on public gatherings, to stop their rallies and meetings.

"People are questioning whether the restrictions have been imposed only to prevent BNP's rallies," said senior joint secretary general Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday.

Speaking at a press conference at BNP's Nayapaltan central office, he said the government has become scare as people have started joining their rallies breaking section 144.

Replying to a question, Rizvi said their planned rallies in the second phase will continue amid the government's restrictions.

'He made law easier for people'

Mizanur Rahman Khan remembered

STAR REPORT

Mizanur Rahman Khan, joint editor of Prothom Alo, left his footprint through his immense patience and tireless work in upholding justice and rights in the country throughout his career.

Speakers made the remarks at a memorial meeting organised by Humanity Foundation at Jatiya Press Club, marking the first death anniversary of the prominent law analyst and journalist yesterday.

Md Abdul Matin, a former justice of the SC's Appellate Division, said Mizanur's contribution in the field of law will be remembered.

Mizanur proved that law-related concerns are not only for practitioners but for people as well, said Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, former governor of Bangladesh Bank. The noted journalist died of cardiac arrest on January 11 last year at a private hospital in the capital. He was 53.

Humanity Foundation's chairperson advocate Muhammad Shafiqur Rahman, journalist Farooq Wasif, DU Prof Asif Nazrul, Press Club GS Ilias Khan, advocates Khurshid Alam Khan and Syeda Rizwana Hasan also spoke at the event.