



Underpass to link everything in airport area

Project centring around HSIA may be completed by 2025

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The government will build a 1.07km underpass in the capital's airport area to link Dhaka airport terminals, railway, BRT, MRT stations and the Hajj camp.

The project's proposed cost is Tk 1,184 crore, which would be borne by government coffers, and the duration would be from July 2023 to June 2025, documents show.

This Roads and Highways Department project is to be implemented by the 24 Engineer Construction Brigade of the Bangladesh Army. Its feasibility was conducted by JPZ Consulting (Bangladesh) Ltd, shows document.

The underpass will have lifts, escalators, travelators (moving walkways) and other facilities.

Upon receiving the Development Project Proposal, the Planning Commission had a meeting with the authorities concerned and asked them to resubmit it with "little but necessary changes", meeting sources said.

Currently, the Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway is one of the busiest roads in the country with Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on one side and the Airport Railway Station on the other.

Upon arrival at the airport, one has to cross the thoroughfare with luggage in hand and get to the other side to catch a bus or train, as the footbridge nearby can accommodate only 14,777 people per hour at best, which is considered insufficient, the documents show.

Those going to the Ashkona Hajj camp have to cross the road too.

The Bangladesh Bridge Authority is also building two elevated expressways -- one from the airport to Kutubkhali on the Dhaka-Chattoogram Highway and one from the airport to the Dhaka EPZ on the Nabinagar-Chandra Highway.

The Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd's implementation of the country's first underground metro rail (Mass Rapid Transit Line-1) from the airport to Kamalapur has already started, while a dedicated bus corridor from the airport to Gazipur is being constructed.

Meanwhile, the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh is currently building the third Dhaka airport terminal.

"The airport area will turn into a transport hub, and the underpass will facilitate travel from one mode to another mode," RHD Chief Engineer Md Ishaque told The Daily Star yesterday.

The document shows a maximum Tk 584.59 crore will be spent on the 1.07km tunnel construction, and Tk 227.85 crore on soil cutting and strengthening.

The eight lifts, 28 escalators, 25 travelators, and other facilities will cost Tk 105.57 crore, while the rest will be spent on other works.

Underpass to link 3 Dhaka Airport terminals, railway, MRT, BRT stations and Hajj Camp

LENGTH 1.07km

PROPOSED COST Tk 1,184cr

DURATION July 2023-June 2025



Trucks are parked illegally in front of an under-construction Bus Rapid Transit station near Gazipur jail, hampering the construction work. The vehicles were waiting there yesterday to offload goods at nearby factories.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

5 SCRAPPED COAL-FIRED PROJECTS

WB advises using sites for solar power plants

Say they could produce 3,788MW of renewable energy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Bank has recommended using the sites of five cancelled coal-fired projects for setting up solar power plants that could produce up to 3,788 megawatts.

Besides, another solar plant could be built in Jamalpur with a capacity of around 2,518MW, said a WB report presented at a workshop titled "Systematic Identification and Access to Land for Renewable Energy in Bangladesh" at a city hotel yesterday.

The six plants could generate 6,306MW, around 24 percent of the government target of generating 16,000MW of renewable energy by 2030 under the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan.

The plants would cost around \$2.46 billion to set up, said the report submitted to the power ministry.

In June 2021, Bangladesh cancelled 10 coal-fired power projects.

The report, prepared by Land Equity International, said it has analysed the potentiality of the sites of five cancelled coal power plants -- two in Cox's Bazar's Matarbari, two in Patuakhali, and one in Moheshkhali, and found the strong possibilities of this repurposing exercise, both in terms of power generation and financial feasibility.

Another solar plant could be built in Jamalpur with a capacity of around 2,518MW, said a WB report.

The proposed 2,462MW Moheshkhali solar plant would be 40 times bigger than the largest solar power plant in service in Bangladesh, the report added.

The benefits of installing the solar plants include reduced power prices, zero pollution and zero carbon emissions. The price of per kWh is now over \$10 and it can drop to \$0.7 depending on

financing model, the report said.

Nasrul Hamid, state minister for power, energy and mineral resources, who joined the closing ceremony of the workshop yesterday, said the main goal of the government now is to supply power at affordable prices.

To this end, an initiative has been taken to set up 2,000MW solar power plants within the next two years, he said.

"We have land scarcity and we have to save our agricultural land ... We need to make a plan considering our agricultural land to achieve the goal of generating 40 percent electricity from clean sources by 2041," he added.

In reply to a query from a reporter after the workshop, he said prices of electricity and gas will be determined following their prices in the international market.

He added that the subsidy given by the government in the two sectors will not continue in future. "We are working to make a guideline on fixing prices."

Webb telescope spots water in rare comet

CNN ONLINE

Astronomers used the James Webb Space Telescope to observe a rare comet in our solar system, making a long-awaited scientific breakthrough and stumbling across another mystery at the same time.



For the first time, water was detected in a main belt comet, or a comet located in the main asteroid belt between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. The discovery came after 15 years of attempts by astronomers using different observation methods.

The space observatory detected water vapour around Comet Read, which suggests that water ice can be preserved in a warmer part of the solar system. A study detailing the findings was published Monday in the journal Nature.

Comets typically exist in the Kuiper Belt and the Oort Cloud, icy regions beyond the orbit of Neptune that can preserve some of the frozen materials left over from the formation of the solar system.

The comets venture on long, oval-shaped orbits around the sun that can take thousands of years and have streaming tails that develop as the frigid objects occasionally pass close to the sun. Their fuzzy appearance and tails of material differentiate comets from asteroids.

Car carrying Zahangir, his mother attacked

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A vehicle carrying suspended GCC mayor Zahangir Alam and his mother Zaida Khatun, an independent in the Gazipur City Corporation mayoral race, was attacked in ward-44 of the city yesterday evening.

The attackers vandalised the Toyota Land Cruiser Prado and threw brick chunks at it, witnesses and followers of Zahangir said.

Talking to reporters after the incident, Zahangir alleged that the supporters of Awami League-backed mayor candidate Azmat Ullah carried out the attack around 6:45pm as they were campaigning in Gopalpur area.

"Everyone has the right to participate in the election. My mother is an independent. Why is there so much anger against her?"

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



ONE FOR ALL ... A chestnut-tailed starling eating fruits from a tree in a village in Khulna. Once finished, she will drop the seed to the soil below. From there, another tree will grow to give shelter and food to many other animals. This is how animals and plants support each other, and in turn, support us. This nature quest is not about the bird but about the one of the biggest factors in the survival of all. From releasing oxygen to and reducing CO2 from the air to storing water, and providing food and shade, the importance of trees knows no bounds but they often have to be destroyed for building homes or making paper. The environment could only flourish if trees could be protected from further harm. They are, after all, sustainers of all life.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

FOREIGN DIPLOMATS

They get better security here than many countries

Says Shahriar Alam days after govt withdrew addl security

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Compared to many countries, Bangladesh provides better and more effective security to foreign diplomats stationed here, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam said yesterday.

"Our law enforcers and home ministry have been providing security and will continue to do so," he told journalists after meeting International Maritime Organization (IMO) council member representatives in the capital's Padma state guest house.

The government withdrew additional police security for four ambassadors, including those of the US and UK, citing a shortage of manpower in the force and improvement in the country's law and order.

Regular security, however, remains the same. The embassies in want of additional security can now get it in exchange for payment and it will be provided by Ansar members.

On Wednesday, the government finalised how the Ansar would provide security to diplomats and foreign missions in Dhaka would be informed about it through notes verbales by Sunday.

At the meeting with IMO council members, Shahriar Alam said.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6