

Bangladesh taking up projects to tackle climate change: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said Bangladesh Climate Development Partnership (BCDP) has been created to synchronise with international stakeholders to face climate change impacts through their global programmes.

The BCDP will work with stakeholders, developed countries, and international organisations and fund programmes to mitigate climate change issues, she said.

The prime minister said this when Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Simon Steele called on her at a bilateral meeting room at the Bangabandhu International Conference Center.

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visits a stall at the four-day UN Climate Adaptation Conference National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Expo 2024 at Bangabandhu International Conference Center yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

MRT LINE-5

Why do you need Tk 1,769.21cr for consultancy?

Planning commission seeks explanation from DMTCL

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The Planning Commission has asked for an explanation regarding the amount metro rail authorities sought for consultancy services for the construction of a new metro line.

Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL) has sought Tk 1,769.21 crore for consultancy services for the construction of Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Line-5 (Southern Route).

An explanation was sought from project authorities as to why such a large amount of money will be required for consultancy services as preparatory works for the project have already been done under a separate project.

The commission also raised some other questions about the project -- which will build a 17.20km metro rail from Gabtoli to Dasherbandi via Kalyanpur, Shyamoli, Asad Gate, Russel Square, Panthapath, Karwanbazar, Hatirjheel, Rampura, and Aftabnagar.

The estimated cost of the project is Tk 54,618.96 crore and the deadline is January 2024 to December 2030. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and South Korea are expected to give Tk 39,138.26 crore, while the rest will be borne by the government.

Against this backdrop, the commission will hold a project evaluation committee (PEC) meeting today with Mohammad Emdad Ullah Mian, member of the Physical Infrastructure Division, in the chair, sources said.



The government has planned to build a 140km metro rail network comprising six lines in Dhaka and adjacent areas within 2030 to reduce traffic jams and pollution.

The first line, MRT Line-6 is now operational from Uttara to Agargaon, while construction of MRT Line-1 and MRT Line-5 (Northern route) is now ongoing.

MRT Line-2 and 4 are still at the preparatory level. The DMTCL has already carried

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Train fares to increase from next month

Railway to lift rebate facilities for travels of over 100km

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Passenger train fares are set to increase from May 4 as Bangladesh Railway (BR) has decided to stop rebating fares for passengers travelling over 100 kilometres.

Currently, BR gives a 20-30 percent rebate for those travelling over 100km, meaning the fares for most destinations will rise once this rebate is cancelled, officials said.

BR yesterday published a circular on a national daily, mentioning that it will not provide the rebate facility, which has been in place since 1992, starting May 4.

Railways Ministry Secretary Humayun Kabir also confirmed it to The Daily Star yesterday.

A passenger travelling more than 100km from May 4 has to pay a higher fare than the existing rate as the rebate will be lifted from that day, a top official of BR told this correspondent.

"We are not directly increasing train fares, but once the rebate is lifted, the fares of most trains will increase ultimately," he said, wishing anonymity.

According to the BR Information Book-2021, the average distance travelled by a passenger is 152.48km.

Currently, BR gives 20 percent for a passenger travelling between 101km and 150km, 25 percent for 251km to 400km, and a 30 percent rebate for distances over 401km.

All of these rebates are going to be cancelled. However, the fare up to 100km will remain unchanged, which means the fares of several local trains operating on routes like Dhaka-Narayanganj or Dhaka-Joydebpur will likely remain the same, officials also said.

BR had been given the rebate facility to encourage people to use trains on long routes.

PM Sheikh Hasina has already given the go-ahead to BR's proposal in March and BR has had a plan to implement this decision since April 1.

But Railways Minister Zillul Hakim, following media reports over fare rise, on March 18 said they have no plans to hike train fares anytime soon, a claim that goes against official

documents signed by the minister himself.

He dismissed the news on the railway's move to raise fares of passenger trains as "rumours," according to a rail ministry press release on March 18.

BR stopped all preparation to implement the decision from April 1 after the minister's comments, a BR official said.

Rail Secretary Humayun Kabir said the prime minister has already approved the proposal.



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Besides, they have not increased train fares in last eight years, despite the fuel price hikes on many occasions. "So, we are going to lift the rebate facilities," he told this correspondent yesterday.

The last time BR hiked fares was in February 2016, by 7.23 percent.

Before that, in October 2012, both passenger and freight train fares were raised by 50 percent to improve services and reduce railway losses, and that move came after 20 years.

BR operates 367 passenger trains and 42 freight trains daily on 3,554km of rail tracks.

Prioritise migrant workers' protection

HRW urges Dhaka to raise the issue with Qatar emir

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Human Rights Watch has called for Bangladesh and Nepal to prioritise labour protections for migrant workers as core talking points with Qatar Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, during his visits to both countries.

Al-Thani arrived in Bangladesh yesterday afternoon from the Philippines and will leave for Nepal on April 24.

Both Bangladesh and Nepal are major sources for Qatar's migrant workforce, which makes up 88 percent of the country's population. Migrant workers from Bangladesh and Nepal have been indispensable to Qatar's economy, particularly in the preparation of the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

There are some 4,00,000 Bangladeshis -- the second highest expatriate community after Indians -- in Qatar.

"It is important for Qatar, Bangladesh, and Nepal to go beyond diplomatic pleasantries and publicly commit to enforceable protections that address the serious abuses that migrant workers continue to face," said Michael Page, deputy Middle East and North Africa director at HRW, in a statement.

"The Emir should not just meet heads of state, but also visit dialysis centres filled with returnee migrant workers from Qatar and speak with the families of workers who died [in Qatar] to see the grave consequences of inadequate labour protections," the statement added.

Qatar-based jobs have enabled migrant workers to send remittance back home to their families, but many workers leave Qatar worse off. They experience abuses including

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BNP postpones its April 26 rally, so does AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League took a day to announce its programme named "peace and development rally" on April 26, apparently to counter its political arch-rival BNP's preannounced event on the same date.

But yesterday, it took the ruling camp only an hour to defer its programme after BNP postponed its scheduled rally.

Though two rival political camps in the country postponed their rallies for different reasons, they were yet to inform new dates.

BNP postponed its rally scheduled to be held in front of the party's Nayapaltan central office due to the ongoing heatwave yesterday evening.

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Anu Muhammad needs 'combined surgery': minister

18-member team to oversee treatment at burn institute

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Jahangirnagar University Professor Anu Muhammad, who lost the toes of his left foot after falling on a rail line on Sunday, will require a "combined operation procedure", said Health Minister Dr Samanta Lal Sen yesterday.

The noted economist, 67, was shifted from Dhaka Medical College Hospital to Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery yesterday, where an 18-member medical team will oversee his treatment.

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CERTIFICATE FORGERY

Former BTEB chairman to be quizzed today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives will interrogate Ali Akbar Khan, former chairman of Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB), in a case filed over forging certificates and selling those.

"We called him to the DB office tomorrow (today) for quizzing. Later, we will also call those whose names surfaced [during investigation]," DB Chief Harun-Or-Rashid said at a press conference at DMP media centre yesterday.

"Legal action will be taken if anyone is found to be involved," he said.

Ali Akbar Khan was made OSD (officer on special duty) on Sunday after detectives found evidence of financial transactions between his wife Sehela Parveen and a gang involved in forging certificates.

A team of Detective Branch of police arrested Sehela, 54, at her home in Uttara on Saturday. Sehela was involved in the racket that made fake certificates, marksheets, registration and admission cards of BTEB, Harun had said.

Sohela was placed on a two-day remand.

DB officials said the gang made millions by issuing over 5,000 fake certificates and marksheets over the last few years.

Meanwhile, Mashur Rahman, deputy commissioner of Lalbagh Division, said at least 30 more have been found to be involved in the racket which includes headteachers and principals of schools and colleges.

Besides, the ACC has formed a three-member committee to investigate the reported involvement of two of its officials in the racket.



Fifteen journalists were honoured with Unicef Meena Media Awards yesterday for their reporting on children's issues. The event was held at a hotel in the capital.

PHOTO: STAR

Media's role crucial in protecting children's rights

Say speakers, 15 journalists win Meena Media Awards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Media has an important role in voicing the needs of children, said speakers at the 18th edition of the Meena Media Awards giving ceremony yesterday.

They also said this award for journalists has created awareness on children's rights.

Unicef yesterday honoured 15 Bangladeshi journalists, including three child journalists with the award, for their outstanding reporting on children's issues at a hotel in the capital.

Speaking as the chief guest, Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury said the media has an important role in voicing the needs of children.

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