

Mirpur fire  
4 staff fired  
for duty  
negligence

UNB, Dhaka

Four officers of the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB) were fired for negligence of duty that led to Friday's fire at a power substation in Mirpur -- the worst such fire incident in the country.

According to the findings of a probe committee, the battery of a circuit breaker, which could have automatically averted the fire as sparks flew up from near the transformer, was down and inoperative.

"The officers concerned must have been aware of the crucial role of the circuit breaker and its battery in case of any emergency," State Minister for Power Iqbal Hassan Mahmood told a press briefing yesterday.

He said the inquiry committee did not find any subversive act behind the fire, which was under terms of reference of the committee to investigate.

Inexperience of both power officials and firefighters in coping with such a fire made things worse. The firefighters initially used water to douse the chemical fire, which

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Govt plans deep sea port to boost trade

Committee works on preliminary regional co-opn formula, foreign investment

RAFIQ HASAN

The government has taken a fresh initiative to set up a deep sea port in view of the increasing volume of foreign trade and mounting pressure on Chittagong Port.

It is also considering a regional approach towards implementing such a massive project, a top official said without giving details.

"We are thinking of a regional approach to such a huge project involving several hundred crore taka because it may not be cost effective in the perspective of our trade alone," said Shipping Secretary Zulfikar Haidar Choudhury.

A high-powered committee headed by Director General of Shipping Ahsanul Azim is doing preliminary work in this regard and taking steps to attract foreign invest-

ment for carrying out feasibility study on the proposed port.

"Foreign investors would be attracted if we can show them the prospect for a huge volume of trade involving our neighbouring countries," Zulfikar said.

Earlier, a feasibility study on deep sea port was conducted during the previous Awami League rule. The study suggested Moheshkhali in Cox's Bazar would be an ideal place. However, no further progress was made in this regard.

This time the government is considering Akram point, around 60 kilometres from Mongla Port, for a deep sea port, according to shipping ministry sources.

The distance between Dhaka and Mongla is about 90 kilometres, less than that between Dhaka and Chittagong.

The sources said Akram point is

a suitable seat for the proposed port in the perspective of a regional approach. Bangla Bandh border check post in Panchagarh district will be opened very soon for trade by road between Bangladesh and Nepal, they added.

Direct road link with Nepal and Bhutan will be established after completion of Rupsha and Padma bridges. Rupsha bridge is likely to be complete by the end of next year. Steps are underway to construct a bridge on the Padma at Pakshi.

A senior official said the shipping ministry will also apprise the prime minister of the necessity of shifting Mongla Port to Akram point.

Meanwhile, steps have been taken to gear up the activities of Mongla Port. Non-arrival of foreign

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BSF shoots dead 1, kidnaps 3

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) gunned down a Bangladeshi citizen and kidnapped three others from the Alatul border in Chapainawa-bganj yesterday.

Sources at Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) said the body of Monirul Islam, 25, son of Enamul Haque of Alatul village in Sadar upazila of Chapainawabganj district, was kept at Renu BSF outpost at Lalgola thana in Murshidabad district of India.

The identity of the three kidnapped persons was not known immediately.

BSF members of Renu camp shot Monirul at around 3:00am while he

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AL brings out procession today against govt 'misrule'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) will bring out a mass procession in the city today to protest the government's failure to run the country.

The procession will march major city streets. Opposition Leader and

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PHOTO: STAR

The tangled extra bumpers on a taxi and a microbus could have caused a serious accident in Motijheel yesterday. The government declared extra bumpers illegal after a car dragged a physician to death on its bumper. But the order was stayed by the High Court upon a writ.

Kushtia police on high alert to tackle Hizbut

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

The district police authorities yesterday put on high alert all six police stations in the district and directed them to nab activists of Hizbut Towhid if they engage in untoward incidents in the name of religion.

The step followed a series of clashes between madrassah students and Hizbut Towhid men in different areas in the last five days. A woman was killed and at least 70 people including 15 women were injured in the clashes.

Deputy Inspector General of Police, Khulna Range, Nabu Bikrom Tripura visited Kushtia yesterday.

Four persons were arrested yesterday for alleged involvement in Saturday's attacks on Hizbut Towhid men's houses at Jugla near the district town.

Meanwhile, sources said 'at least 1200 trained members' of Hizbut Towhid, including 200 women, are active in Kushtia, Meherpur, Chuadanga and Jhenidah districts for long.

They circulated leaflets and made door-to-door campaigns with the help of female activists calling for 'jihad' (holy war) to establish 'real Islam'.

Hizbut men always carry hammer for use on their opponents whenever a clash breaks out. On

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2 teenagers killed in captivity

STAR DESK

Two teenage boys were abducted and later killed in two incidents in Kushtia and Feni.

Our correspondent from Kushtia reports: An abducted schoolboy was killed Saturday as his father failed to pay the ransom demanded by his abductors.

Police recovered the body of Ripon Hossain, 16, son of Insan Ali, from a field at Roghunathpur in Daulatpur Upazila in the district and arrested a Union Parishad (UP)

member Didar Hossain in connection with the murder.

Police said Ripon, a class 10 student at Pragpur High School, went missing on Thursday evening after two young men, Ziqul and Mohidul, called him out of his house at around 8:00pm.

When Ripon's father went to file a general diary at the police station the following day, Pragpur UP member Didar Hossain approached him

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Cops look to Tripura border for Jamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Law enforcers have shifted their focus to bordering areas with India in their attempts to rescue the abducted businessman Jamaluddin Ahmed Chowdhury.

"Abul Kasem, prime accused in the abduction case and chairman of Fatikchhari union parishad, might have taken Jamal across the border to Indian state Tripura. We are checking the report," a senior police official said yesterday seeking anonymity.

The joint forces operating in Khagrachhari border area were put on high alert, he added.

If necessary, law agencies would seek support of the Tripura government in rescuing the businessman and arresting the kidnappers. He admitted rescue operation at Fatikchhari and adjoining areas made no progress and the joint forces lost contact with the source.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Commissioner of Chittagong Metropolitan Police SM Sabbir Ali

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

FOOTPATH FOUL-UP: Pedestrians have no choice but to walk on the road yesterday, as sidewalks have been taken over by builders dumping construction materials and a makeshift shop, opposite the National Sports Council in Purana Paltan, Dhaka.

Killing Arafat an option: Israel

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Israel's vice premier said yesterday killing Palestinian President Yasser Arafat was an option in its threat to "remove" him as an obstacle to peace.

"Killing (him) is definitely one of the options," Ehud Olmert, a mainstream member of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's cabinet, told Israel Radio.

"We are trying to eliminate all the heads of terror, and Arafat is one of the heads of terror," Olmert said.

Israel's Maariv newspaper reported yesterday that Avi Dichter, chief of the Shin Bet domestic security service, said in internal discussions it would be better to kill Arafat rather than expel him.

Dichter, the report said, believes Arafat's death would have a short-term effect, touching off protests in the Palestinian territories that would last only several weeks, whereas exile would return him to the world stage and win him sympathy.

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Agitating the refreshing way

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Diploma engineers across the country yesterday began to work for one hour beyond office hours to press for their four-point demand.

Diploma engineers have been demonstrating since September 4 for implementation of their demands including reinstatement of 750 engineers who were terminated from different organisations including the BADC, BGMC, BCIC and eradication of salary disparity.

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Education, not jail sought for juvenile delinquents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday suggested better ways of dealing with juvenile delinquents, including arranging education for them in safe custody instead of sending them to jail.

"There are juvenile delinquents serving jail term for two years without being produced before the magistrate," Mohammad Zillur Rahman, inspector general of prisons, told the seminar.

He said the reality inside jail is worse than what the media portrays.

The seminar was told that a magistrate, superintendent of police and jail superintendent have been asked to review the cases of juvenile delinquents in each district.

Dr Kamal Uddin Siddiqui, principal secretary to the prime minister, attended the seminar as chief guest, while Shahudul Haque, inspector general of police (IGP), and E Daniel Selvanagam, executive director of World Vision Bangladesh, attended as special guests.

The seminar, held at the telecom

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Shamsur Rahman killing

Journalist included in chargesheet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday submitted an extended charge sheet in the killing of journalist Shamsur Rahman, accusing a journalist of Jessore of the murder.

Farazi Azmal Hossain, formerly a journalist of Jessore and now working with the Daily Ittefaq in Dhaka who is also known to be a friend of the deceased, has been included on the list of the accused.

Moula Box, an officer of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), yesterday submitted the extended charge sheet after one year of investigation.

Talking to the BBC Bangla Service last night, Moula Box said, "Police started probing the case after taking court permission as the first charge sheet was not done properly."

"I have submitted the charge sheet after quizzing all the witnesses and one name has been added to the new list," Moula said.

However, Farazi flatly denied the charge. "I believe not a single person

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Sept 15		6-02 pm
Sept 16	5-45 am	

Prayer Timings		
September 15		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-45	5-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-33	5-00
Maghrib	6-10	6-14
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		

BNP leader Nurul murder trial now begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The trial of the Laxmipur BNP leader Nurul Islam murder case scheduled for yesterday begins today in the Speedy Trial Tribunal, Chittagong.

The trial could not be started as police failed to produce Paran, one of the 13 accused and bodyguard of prime accused former pourashabha chairman and Laxmipur Awami League leader Abu Taher, before the court.

However, 12 other accused were present in the court yesterday.

Alongside the accused, three of 58 witnesses -- then Laxmipur Bar Council president and BNP leader AH Tarekuddin Chowdhury, also the plaintiff of the case, then deputy commissioner of Laxmipur AKM Mahbulul Alam and then superintendent of police (SP) Irfan Ali Khan

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PHOTO: AFP

Anti-globalisation demonstrators burn a US flag yesterday during a protest rally against the Fifth World Trade Organisation Ministerial Conference in Cancun, Mexico.