



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



TO People's Right to Know

TODAY'S ISSUE 20 PAGES

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XVI NO. 79

DHAKA MONDAY APRIL 3, 2006

www.thedailystar.net

CHAITRA 20, 1412 BS

RABI'UL AWAL 4, 1427 HJRI

20 PAGES PRICE: Tk 7.00

Rejoinder, our reply

The Power Development Board (PDB) has claimed The Daily Star report headlined "PDB to incur colossal loss on costly plants" published Thursday is "misleading."

In a rejoinder, the PDB noted that due to "severe power crisis" prevailing in the country the government opted for power plants on rental basis as an "emergency" management of the situation.

It added that the price offers received so far from skid-mount bidders ranging from Tk 2.63/kwh to Tk 3.01/kwh "seem to be reasonable" in comparison with the rates of power purchased from existing simple cycle IPP projects, where the price is between Tk 3.50/kwh and Tk 3.8/kwh.

"Price for liquid fuel based power generated by PDB in the western grid is Tk 14.68/kwh while offered price for rental power at

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

HARBIN'S TONGI PLANT

Junk for money

Plant trips 75 times since operation in March '05

SHARIEF KHAN

The four-party alliance government's symbol of achievement in power sector, the 80 megawatt Tongi power plant has tripped over 75 times since it started operation in March last year -- mostly due to very poor machinery supplied by the government's favourite Chinese power company Harbin.

The records of Power Development Board (PDB) show that the Tk 360 crore plant tripped 39 times between March and September during its test operation and the remaining 36 times after Prime Minister Khaleda Zia inaugurated it on September 3 last

year. The power unit tripped within hours of the launching of its commercial operation by the premier.

PDB experts say, between June 22, 2005 and March 11, 2006, the Tongi plant remained shut for a staggering 2026 hours. In monetary value, PDB incurred a loss of Tk 34.03 crore by not being able to sell power from the plant during this period.

Although the low-quality work of Harbin has surpassed the ill reputation of another Chinese company CMEC that built the two 210 mw Razoan plants during the previous BNP regime, Harbin has been recently awarded the contracts for the Fenchuganj 90 MW

and Chandpur 150 MW power plant projects bending rules and regulations.

In the case of the Tongi plant -- which engineers now term as a 'junk' -- roughly two-third of its shut-downs were caused by poor machinery installed by Harbin.

Of all the sub-standard equipment installed by the company -- PDB has singled out two inappropriate gas booster compressors (GBC) as the major cause of the problem. But the company would not change these faulty machinery -- neither would PDB penalise the company.

Rather, Harbin and its powerful

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

50 injured as Shibir clashes with JCD

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

At least 50 students were injured as the Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) clashed with the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) at Jessore Govt MM College yesterday.

Assistant Superintendent of Police Jilur Rahman, Officer in-charge of Jessore Police Station Mostafa Kamal and Sub-inspector Abdul Karim were also injured as police tried to stop the students from fighting over supremacy on the campus.

The clashes were triggered as Shibir men allegedly attacked JCD activists Shobhan and Monir around 12:30pm on the campus. JCD and other student organisations including the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), Jatiya Chhatra Front and Biplabi Chhatra Moitri retaliated, leading to a series

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

TERROR THREAT

Airport security to be upgraded

12-member body to recommend measures

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Waking up to the global terrorist threat, the government has decided to upgrade the security system at all the airports in Bangladesh and seal the loopholes in the existing system.

A 12-member expert committee was formed yesterday to make recommendations in this regard after studying existing security systems at modern airports in other countries.

The committee, headed by

Mohammad Mohsin, additional secretary to the home ministry, will submit its report in a month, suggesting immediate, mid-term and long-term measures to develop a unified security system for all the airports.

The joint secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism has been made member secretary of the committee that includes representatives from Biman Bangladesh Airlines, Ansar, Customs, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), Fire Service and intelligence

agencies. The committee will examine the flaws in the airport security system in Bangladesh. Its members in small groups will visit, if necessary, some airports outside the country.

"We have many (security) weaknesses... our airport security system is not up to the mark," State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar told reporters yesterday, after an inter-ministerial meeting on airport security held at the home ministry conference room.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



PHOTO: STAR

This floating dock bought for Tk 70 crore from Germany in 1962 stationed at Barisal is used to repair 60 to 70 ships a year. After repairs at Narayanganj dockyard four years ago, it has been kept idle for unknown reasons at Gazi Ghat in the city's Shyampur area, with the badly contaminated Buriganga water gnawing away at it.

Dry spell casts long shadow over crops

Experts stress increasing crop varieties to withstand sultry summer

REAZ AHMAD

A prolonged drought-like situation across the country that has already cast a spell over this year's boro farming worries the farmers who had to invest high due to input mismanagement.

Scarce urea supply in time of need in the remote pockets of the country, high diesel prices and erratic power supply caused the boro farmers to invest more than usual.

Now, the lack of rain comes as the last curse on them.

Scientists now think that the country requires drought-tolerant varieties of crop that will withstand such sultry summer.

"Even if the problems of fertiliser, diesel and drought don't have any impact on the overall food production, it would definitely have impacts on the price of rice in future since the growers had to invest a lot for boro this year," said

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

ELECTORAL REFORM TALKS

Jamaat issue may limit it to AL-BNP

14-party forms reply drafting committee

HASAN JAHIH TUSHER

In face of the Awami League-led 14-party opposition combine's staunch denial to Jamaat-Islami's participation, the proposed dialogue on caretaker government and electoral reforms may turn exclusive between the country's two political heavyweights, AL and BNP insiders tipped off yesterday.

Meanwhile, after a series of

meetings the 14-party line-up yesterday set up a 7-member committee to draft a reply to the BNP secretary general's letter inviting it to the dialogue. The committee members are 14-party coordinator Abdul Jalil, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Rashed Khan Menon, Hasanul Haque Inu, Pankaj Bhattacharya and Enamul Haque.

The committee starts working today and is expected to finalise the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Hearing on HC rule over CEC's holding 2 offices deferred again

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The hearing on the High Court rule over Justice MA Aziz's holding simultaneously the offices of the Appellate Division judge and Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) was deferred for a week yesterday.

With the latest, the hearing has been deferred for the third time. Over eight months after issuance of the rule, the High Court bench of Justice Awlad Ali and Justice Zinat Ara on February 28 fixed March 21

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

OMS of sugar in Dhaka from tomorrow

STAR REPORT

As sugar price continues to rise hitting Tk 62 per kilogram, the government yesterday decided to sell a ton of sugar daily in each of the 90 wards in Dhaka city from tomorrow in a bid to stabilise the market.

Ward commissioners will supervise the open market sale (OMS) of sugar at Tk 41 per kilogram in their respective areas and report to the commerce ministry as there are allegations against the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) officials that they are not

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Chief whip sues 5 editors for 'defamation'

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Chief Whip Khondaker Delwar Hossain yesterday sued editors of five dailies -- Prothom Alo, Janakantha, Sangbad, Jugantor and Aker Kagoj.

The five separate lawsuits charged with defamation 14 people of different national dailies including publishers of the Prothom Alo

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

SEPARATION OF JUDICIARY Govt faces SC wrath again over delay

SC rules on contempt charge against 10 bureaucrats today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) today will make its ruling on the contempt of court petition filed against 10 top bureaucrats for not implementing the apex court's directives on separation of the judiciary from the executive.

Full bench of the five-member Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassar Husain yesterday heard the contempt petition filed on March 1 by Barrister Amir-Ul Islam, intervener in the judiciary-separation case, and fixed the date for passing order.

During the hearing, the Attorney General AJ Mohammad

Ali outlined the 'steps taken by the government' for separation of the judiciary.

But the court expressed its displeasure and reprimanded the government for dilly-dallying on the matter.

The 10 bureaucrats include Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Dr Kamal Uddin Siddiqui, Law Secretary Alaaddin Sardar, former law secretaries Md Asaduzzaman and ATM Afzal Hossain Ahmed, Establishment Secretary Dr Mahbubur Rahman, former establishment secretary and incumbent Cabinet Secretary ASM Abdul Halim, Home Secretary

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

PM asks DCs to keep madrasa students away from militancy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prime minister (PM) urged deputy commissioners (DC) to motivate the students of madrasas and orphanages in their respective areas, to make sure that they do not get involved in militancy.

The PM's directive came while she was answering to the queries of the DCs yesterday at the DC Conference 2006 held in the secretariat.

Sources said about 18 DCs spoke during the conference describing various problems. They reported 101 problems in writing, which they are facing at the field level. They also talked about their experiences in different development activities.

Some DCs suggested making a separate law for realising the unrealised bills of Titas Gas. The

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

One Time Paint for Many Seasons

BERGER Weather Coat SMOOTH 100% ACRYLIC

- Anti-fungal
- Anti-fading
- Anti-flaking

THE SCIENCE OF WEATHERPROOFING

BRAC BANK

Your Account Balance is Tk. 11,399

SMS BANKING
Bank in your hand

BRAC Bank introduces SMS Banking. Now bank without walk-in, no talking at all. All you need to have, is GrameenPhone or AKTEL connection to stay in touch with your BRAC Bank account round the clock, 24 hours a day.

Account Balance | Mini Statement | Alert on FDR Maturity | High Value Transaction Alert |

Follow 3 easy steps to bank on your mobile phone:

- Go to Message option of your handset
- Type A
- Send to 3939 from GP/AKTEL Connection

Message Phone number 3939 Your Account Balance is Tk. 11,399

BRAC BANK LIMITED

0174-024246
0174-024176

*Conditions Apply