

POWER FAILURE

Energy adviser gets stuck in coal mine lift for 45 minutes

UNB, Dhaka

Energy Adviser Mahmudur Rahman yesterday got stuck underground in Barapukuria coal mine for 45 minutes when the lift became inoperative due to electricity failure.

According to reports received in Dhaka, Mahmud had gone about 1,900 feet deep down the coal mine while visiting the project in the evening. A foreigner and some local engineers were with him.

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FACTORY DAMAGE

Foreign investors may seek compensation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The foreign investors will seek compensation from the government as they incurred huge financial losses due to the attacks on their factories and subsequent closure of those.

According to sources, foreign investors claimed that they met with a loss of around Tk 500 crore, as agitating workers vandalised and set fire to several factories at

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Highway blocked

as MP Ilyas Ali's house attacked

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Activists of Osmaniganj and Balaganj upazila BNP and its front organisations barricaded the Dhaka-Sylhet Highway at several places yesterday, protesting an attack on ruling party lawmaker M Ilyas Ali's residence in the city on Wednesday night.

Some members of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) loyal to Ariful Haque Chowdhury, who is said to enjoy blessings from Finance Minister Saifur Rahman, pelted bricks at Ilyas' house on

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'Crossfire' killing challenged

HC rule on govt

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a rule asking the government to explain why the reported extra-judicial killing of Tunda Ismail in fetters should not be properly investigated and why the perpetrators should not be brought to book.

Tunda, a listed criminal, who was shown arrested in an arms case and placed on remand for interrogation, was killed in "crossfire" in the capital's Lalbagh area.

A resident of Kamrangirchar, Tunda was wanted in 13 criminal cases including seven for murders, according to police.

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Mall guards loot Tk 1.41cr jewellery, mobile

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Security guards of Rajlaxmi Complex, a shopping mall in Uttara Model Town, looted cash, gold and diamond jewellery and mobile phones worth Tk 1.41 crore from three shops sometime Wednesday night, police said yesterday.

Police and the shop-owners said four security guards of the market heisted two jewellery and a cellphone shops by doping two other guards and went missing.

Police arrested Enamul Haq Hafiz, managing director (MD) of the private security agency, Vigilance Security Limited, but failed to capture the guards recruited by the agency or recover the looted cash and valuables.

Uttara Shop Owners'

Association threatened to go for movement if the police fail to recover the looted goods and arrest the culprits in two days.

The heist took place sometime between 10:30pm Wednesday and 4:30am yesterday. Locals first noticed two guards, Sobhan, 30, and Jahid, 28, lying unconscious in front of the mall at around 4:30am and rushed them to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Owner of Rajnandini Jewellers Joydev Dutt noticed the burglary when he opened his shop on the first floor of the market at 8:00am yesterday. "I found the locks broken and a lock cutter lying in front of the collapsible gate," Joydev told The Daily Star.

Joydev found all the diamond and gold jewellery and Tk 2.25 lakh

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Factories restart with thin presence of workers

STAR REPORT

Production in garment factories in the city and on its outskirts including Dhaka EPZ resumed yesterday amidst tight security after three days of vandalism and arson by workers agitating to realise their 11-point demand.

The resumption of work followed a tripartite meeting among the government, BGMEA and trade union leaders on Wednesday night.

No untoward incident was reported yesterday and presence of workers was much less than usual.

Many workers had left for their homes in the wake Monday's violence fearing arrest and because some of the torched factories were declared closed for an indefinite period, throwing their employees into a state of uncertainty.

Law enforcement agencies including Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), Armed Police Battalion (APBn), riot police and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) have been deployed at

most of the garment units.

Meanwhile, normalcy returned at the factories both in and outside the EPZ (export processing zone) in Savar. Attendance of workers however varied from factory to factory as many of them have gone home. Workers' attendance was lower in factories outside the EPZ.

Factory authorities hoped all workers would join duty by tomorrow and normal production would start.

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A smaller number of workers appear to work at Envoy Fashion, a garment factory in Ashulia on the outskirts of Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

14-party asks CEC, commissioners to quit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL)-led 14-party opposition combine yesterday asked Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Aziz and two other 'controversial' commissioners to quit the Election Commission (EC) Secretariat within a week for, what they alleged, preparing 'fake' voter list and defying High Court directives.

The opposition leaders at a rally on the Bangabandhu Avenue in city also asked the CEC and two other commissioners not to go to the EC secretariat today.

They also asked the president to form a supreme judicial council to remove the 'controversial' commissioners before appointing persons acceptable to all parties.

Hailing the Supreme Court and

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CEC now says he will act upon SC verdict

Field-level staffs' pay stopped

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Aziz yesterday said the Election Commission will initiate steps to prepare the voter list according to the Supreme Court (SC) verdict.

Aziz said he waited for the "certified copy of the judgement" until 5:00pm yesterday but it did not reach the Election Commission (EC).

"We will take steps according to the verdict," the CEC said when reporters intercepted him on his way out of the office yesterday

afternoon, asking about the EC's next course of action.

Meanwhile, some senior officials at the EC Secretariat have asked the district election officers over telephone to stop payments to the manpower involved in preparing the voter list, sources said.

The EC, however, has not issued orders to stop the ongoing work of a fresh voter list as of yesterday, three days after pronouncement of the SC verdict about the voter list for the next parliamentary elections.

Aziz had maintained silence since the SC in its judgement on Tuesday retained the January 4

High Court (HC) order to revise the existing electoral rolls prepared in 2000.

Ignoring the HC directives, the CEC continued the task for preparation of a fresh voter list, the draft of which was published on May 3.

Meanwhile, the district election officers have apparently stopped their work on the draft rolls.

REMUNERATIONS SUSPENDED

Sources said the EC Secretariat is yet to issue orders but verbally directed the officials to suspend payments of remuneration to the

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HC slaps ban on filling up Gulshan Lake

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday ordered restraining the land grabbers from filling up the Gulshan-Banani Lake for creating new plots.

Passing an interim order, a division bench comprising Justice MA Matin and Justice ATM Fazle Kabir issued a rule upon the government to explain why its action allowing the grabbers to fill up the lake should not be declared illegal.

The court also issued another rule asking the government to show cause why it should not be directed to refrain itself and restrain others from filling up the lake and to take effective step to preserve it in its original shape.

The interim injunction and twin-rule came following a public interest litigation (PIL) writ, challenging the legality of government acts violating the Jaladhar Shongrokhhan Ain 2000.

Secretary of housing and public works ministry, Rajdhani Unnayan Katripakha (Rajuk) and its chairman and member (estate) have been made respondents in the case.

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President undergoes bypass surgery today

Sircar acting president; Bangabhaban says certain media ran confusing reports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Iajuddin Ahmed undergoes a bypass surgery at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore today.

Bangabhaban, the presidential palace, in a handout yesterday said certain newspapers and electronic media ran confusing reports on the treatment of the president which was damaging the nation's image.

In an angiogram, an investigative medical procedure, one completely blocked and two partially blocked arteries were found in his heart yesterday, Bangladesh High Commissioner to Singapore Munshi Faiz Ahmed told the president's press secretary over telephone yesterday.

The handout, quoting the high commissioner, said the condition of the president is stable though he is seriously ill.

The president is under supervision of senior physicians and they have taken all preparations for the

bypass today.

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar, now the acting president, inquired about the condition of the ailing president who was flown to Singapore on Wednesday.

Iajuddin was admitted to Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in Dhaka on Tuesday for a medical check-up. A seven-member medical board, headed by Prof MA Malek, was formed for his treatment.

As advised by the medical board, the president was flown to Singapore by an air ambulance for cardiac treatment the next day.

The Bangabhaban handout also said, "A number of newspapers and electronic media have been quoting people and officials not assigned to deliver information on the president's health."

The statement said it expected all quarters concerned would realise that the image of the country is linked with the dignity of the

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3 indigenous people murdered in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unknown criminals murdered three indigenous people at a house in Uttara, while police recovered the body of a man at Demra and a man killed his wife in Shyampur in the capital yesterday.

The victims in Uttara are Sanjay Kumar Singh, an HSC examinee of Milestone School and College, his uncle, aged around 40, and a male domestic help. Details about their identity could not be known.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members around 10:30pm last night recovered the bodies at a flat on the top floor of a six-storey building on road-10 of sector-6. The three bodies were found in two different bedrooms of the flat.

Following a tip off, Rab men, over telephone, told the owner of the building Bhajan Kumar Saha, a businessman, that they would like to search his building. Breaking in into the house, the elite force found the bodies with their throat slit and lying in pool of blood. They also recovered a machete and two knives.

However, the security guard of the building, Nipson, said he had seen Sanjay entering the building yesterday morning.

Saha told reporters Sanjay's elder brother Sumon and two sisters rented the flat in March last year. Their parents visited them several times and they led a luxurious life, the owner of the house added.

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SHADY NGOS

Angry depositors block highway to north

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Hundreds of aggrieved clients of Social Development Sangsad (SDS) and Islamic Trade and Commerce Ltd (ITCL) blockaded the Dhaka-North Bengal highway for one hour yesterday demanding refund of their deposits with the NGO and its defunct bank ITCL.

The ITCL Clients' Association demonstrated at Shaheed Smriti Paura Udyan around 11:00am and held a rally there demanding refund of their Tk 100 crore deposits.

The ITCL Clients' Association leaders at the rally gave an ultimatum to the prime minister to take necessary measures to refund their

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EXPERTS ON REVISED TATA PROPOSAL

Still room for improvement

SHARIER KHAN

Indian giant Tata's revised proposal for steel, fertiliser and power plants plus coal mining is much better than the previous one but the revised gas price offer is still not attractive to Bangladesh, experts believe.

Tata has moved from its previous stance of gas tariff at around \$1 per thousand cubic feet (mcf) and gas supply guarantee for 20 plus years. In its revised offer, it has proposed a gas price formula that uses fertiliser and steel prices in the international market. This formula is one of its kind. Typically gas

prices for investment are fixed on the basis of international oil price.

Under Tata's formula, the current gas price for its fertiliser plant stands at \$3.1 and for steel plant \$2.6 per mcf. The floor price and the ceiling are \$1.5 and \$4 respectively for the first five years and then \$2 and \$4. And instead of a 20-year guarantee for gas supply, Tata is seeking 10 to 14 years of guarantee.

Talking to The Daily Star, a number of experts said commercial price of Bangladesh gas is currently between \$3.5 and \$4. If the Tata formula is applied,

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Int'l community won't force solution to pre-polls deadlock

US envoy says

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US Ambassador in Dhaka Patricia Butenis yesterday said the international community or the development partners would not force solution or dictate to resolve the pre-elections deadlock in Bangladesh.

Underlining the need for continuous dialogue between the ruling and opposition parties, she said, "We don't have any magic solution in our hands...we encourage both the parties to continue dialogue, privately and quietly,

make some kind of compromise and find solutions for free and fair elections."

Exchanging opinions on various aspects of the United States-Bangladesh relationship with the senior members of Jatiya Press Club, the ambassador said as a friend of Bangladesh the US hopes that the upcoming elections in Bangladesh will be free and fair. Moreover, the government would not seek to stack the deck in its favour and the opposition would use democratic means, not street

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NOTICE

Channel i will telecast a special programme today at 5:30pm on the "Regional Dialogue on National Election 2007: Civil Society Initiative for Accountable Development" organised by Centre for Policy Dialogue, The Daily Star, Prothom Alo and Channel i in Comilla on May 20.

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