

POWER PROJECTS
State minister denies pressure from high-ups

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The State Minister for Power Anwarul Kabir Talukder denied being under pressure from government high-ups or any quarters while taking decisions on implementing power projects.

"I did not face any pressure from any quarter and there is hardly any possibility of anyone putting me under pressure in future," he said when asked whether he had been facing any obstacles from any quarters.

Talukder was exchanging views with the members of Forum for Energy Reporters in the National Press Club yesterday.

He explained the government's various plans and programmes to increase power generation and

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Israel refuses to rule out Lebanon invasion

13 civilians, 11 soldiers killed in fresh air raids as Lebanese PM calls for truce

REUTERS, AFP, Beirut

Israeli warplanes pounded Lebanon yesterday, killing at least 34 people, as diplomatic efforts brought no signs of an early end to the week-old assault as Israel's army refused to rule out a massive ground invasion of south Lebanon.

Lebanese Prime Minister Fuad Siniora pleaded yesterday for the international community to organise an immediate ceasefire, accusing Israel of massacres and wanting to blast his country "back 50 years".

In a statement, he "implored the international community and the

Arab countries to work towards installing an immediate ceasefire" to end Israel's week-old offensive against Lebanon.

Lebanon's grim body count continued to mount yesterday, with 11 soldiers and at least 13 civilians killed and several families trapped and feared dead under the rubble of houses pulverised by Israeli missiles.

Nine civilians, all from one family and including children, were killed and four wounded in an air strike that destroyed a house in the south Lebanese village of Aitaroun. Four others died in strikes elsewhere in

the south.

In attacks Tuesday, 11 members of Lebanon's armed forces -- which Israel is demanding takes back control of southern Lebanon from Hezbollah -- were killed and 40 others wounded in a strike on a military base east of Beirut.

The base in the southern area of Kfar Chima took a direct hit as the soldiers rushed to their bomb shelters, leaving at least 11 soldiers dead and 35 wounded, the Lebanese military said.

The overall toll now stands at 234, including 211 civilians and 23

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11 Bangladeshi migrants held in Ukraine

AFP, Kiev

Ukrainian border guards detained 14 Pakistanis, 11 Bangladeshis and an Afghan overnight as they were preparing to cross the border into Slovakia, the border service said yesterday.

Three Palestinians were also detained, the border service said in a statement.

The first group were found camping in a forest near the border, while the Palestinians were travelling in a car with local people smugglers, the statement said.

Ukraine has become a major route for migrants trying to enter the European Union following the bloc's 2004 enlargement to the border of this ex-Soviet republic.

On Monday Ukraine's border service said it had detained 25 Moldovans who were trying to get into Slovakia.

A total of 6,834 illegal migrants were detained in western Ukraine last year, an increase from about 6,000 the year before, according to official figures.



PHOTO: STAR

A large contingent of police guards the main gate of Jagannath University in Old Dhaka yesterday which was closed down following violent clashes between students' organisations on Monday.

4 JMB men get life in Aug 17 blasts case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kurigram

A court here yesterday awarded life imprisonment to four activists of outlawed Jama'atul Mujaheddin Bangladesh (JMB) for their involvement in serial blasts in the district town on August 17 last year.

The punished JMB activists are Al Haj Md Shamsul Huda, 48, Hafej Md Habib Ullah (Habib), 26, and Ekramul Haque, 23 of Nageswari upazila, and Shaheb Sarkar, 30 of Rajarhat upazila.

Special Tribunal Judge Farjana Begum pronounced the judgment at around 11:00am. She fined the JMB men Tk 25,000 each, in default, they are to suffer three years more in jail.

The four JMB activists have been sentenced to seven years rigorous imprisonment by the same court under Explosive Substances Act.

The court also fined the JMB men Tk 5,000 each, in default, they are to suffer another six months in jail.



PHOTO: STAR

The agitating non-government school and college teachers shutoff the road from Paltan intersection to GPO in the capital yesterday causing a massive traffic chaos in the surrounding areas.

WB to provide \$275m for Siddhirganj power plant

UNB, Dhaka

The World Bank (WB) will provide about \$275 million for the Siddhirganj Peaking Power Plant (SPPP) Project to help the government overcome nagging power crisis.

The estimated cost of the project, expected to reduce gap in the country's power sector generation by adding 300MW to the national grid, is around \$350 million, according to a WB press release.

It said the bank will support the proposed SPPP through concessional International

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Development rice ends up in corrupt pockets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

At least 1,000 tonnes of rice was misappropriated from 25 development projects in Dhanut and Kahaloo upazilas of Bogra district during the last two financial years, according to the district administration.

Kamal Uddin Biswas, thana nirbahi officer (TNO) of Dhanut, said the government is going to file several cases against the chairmen and committee members of three projects undertaken in the area.

Sources in the land ministry said a letter has been sent to Dhanut upazila administration asking it to return around 37 metric ton rice

allegedly stolen from five development projects there. An investigation revealed that at least 140 metric ton rice was misappropriated from five projects in the upazila.

The district administration resolved to implement the development projects named "Adarsha Gram O Abasan" for the landless people of Dhanut upazila with the financial assistance of European Union (EU) about three years back.

The EU allocated 1,431.63 metric ton rice for earth-filling and other development work in 16 Adarsha Gram projects and 251 metric ton rice for the Abashan

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Jagannath calm, tension in fear of further clash

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Jagannath University campus was unusually calm yesterday after two days of violence as Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and a number of left-leaning students' fronts clashed with Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS).

Tension was running high on the campus fearing further clash.

The main entrance to the campus was closed yesterday and around 500 police personnel were deployed to prevent any untoward incidents. No students were allowed to enter the campus but the teachers were allowed.

At least 100 students and several policemen were injured when

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Oil tanker Shourabh's fate to be decided tomorrow

RAFIQ HASAN

The fate of public oil tanker Banglar Shourabh, which caught fire last month at the outer anchorage of Chittagong port, is likely to be decided tomorrow whether it will be repaired or scrapped.

State Minister for Shipping M Quamrul Islam is scheduled to visit Chittagong tomorrow to give the final decision about the wrecked tanker, according to sources.

Shipping Secretary Rafiqul Islam and other high officials of the ministry will accompany the minister and hold a meeting in Chittagong, the sources added.

The BSC oil tanker was procured 25 years back at a cost of Tk 50

crore. The oil tanker caught fire at Charley (C) point of the outer anchorage of Chittagong port on July 24.

"We will try our best to repair the ship and make it operative again," Quamrul Islam told The Daily Star. He said before making the final decision the government will examine all the investigation reports submitted by committees formed after the tragic fire incident.

Two investigation committees formed by the ministry and Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) already submitted its report to the government.

Another expert committee

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Car bomb in Iraq's Shia town kills 59

British troops gun down 5 Iraqis

REUTERS, AFP, Kufa/Basra

A car bomb hit a group of labourers after they boarded a minibus in a market in a Shia city in Iraq yesterday, killing 59 people and sparking clashes between protesters and police, witnesses and officials said.

At least five Iraqis were killed and 15 wounded in clashes with British troops yesterday in the southern Iraqi city of Basra.

The blast, some 50-100 meters from a Shia shrine in the southern city of Kufa, tore through the minibus after it had pulled out of the crowded market.

Hospital and security sources said 132 people were wounded in the blast, which dealt a fresh blow to

Shia Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's efforts to promote national reconciliation.

Riyadh al-Shibni, a doctor in a Najaf health centre, said hospitals in Najaf and Kuf had received 59 bodies.

Police in the scene were pelted with rocks by angry crowds. Many appeared to be followers of radical Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, who has many supporters in the town. Kufa is near the holy city of Najaf, 160km south of Baghdad.

The protesters chanted to the police: "You are traitors!" "You are not doing your job!" "American agents!"

Police then fired into the air to disperse the onlookers and con-

fused scenes ensued, a Reuters reporter at the scene said.

"It is very chaotic now. The police are shooting in the air and the crowds are running," he said. "Ambulances are racing around town."

The blast, one of the bloodiest since a government of national unity took office in April, came a day after gunmen killed more than 50 people in Mahmudiya, near Baghdad.

Najaf Governor Assad Abu-Kalal blamed the Kufa attack on the "criminal Baathists and terrorists of Mahmudiya." Witnesses said the minibus had Baghdad license plates. The blast destroyed six cars

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BSF kills 1

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkhira

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) gunned down a Bangladeshi cattle trader at village Swarupdaha under Swarupnagar Police Station of 24 Parganas district, West Bengal, on Monday night.

According to Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) sources, the BSF men of Tarali camp opened fire on Bulu, 24, son of Meher Ali of village Gobindakati in Sathkhira Sadar upazila, while he was returning home with cows he bought from India.

Bulu received bullets and died instantly. The Indian border guards then took away the body, according to a report received from across the border.

BDR yesterday condemned the killing and asked its Indian counterpart to return the body. But the BSF personnel of Tarali and Gunarajpur outposts fired some bullets, targeting the BDR men of Keragachhi and Hijaldi outposts in

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Hartal observed in Phulbari to protest coalmine project

OUR CORRESPONDENT

A half-day hartal was observed yesterday at Phulbari upazila of Dinajpur protesting open-pit mining at the Phulbari coalmine.

Phulbari Protection Committee called for the hartal earlier.

Hundreds of protestors besieged the Phulbari Upazila Nirbahee Officer's office during hartal hours.

Stores, markets, banks, government and non-government organisations remained closed and most inter district buses stayed off the roads during the 8-hour hartal.

Md Shahjahan Ali Putu, SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



PHOTO: STAR

A Dhaka City Corporation bulldozer brings down an illegal kitchen market adjacent to Banani Community Centre in the city yesterday as part of a drive to dismantle unauthorised structures.

Prayer Timing		
July 19		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-54	6-58
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation