

on Friday

Your 16-page
weekend
paper

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70
days to the
3rd Millennium

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Govt ignores IFC ire to move ahead with Marubeni deal

By Sharier Khan

The government has decided not to "surrender" to pressures of the World Bank (WB) and US power generating company AES about "not signing a new power plant scheme" — namely the Meghnaghata-2 450 MW power plant.

The US company has recently stopped all constructions of the 360 MW Haripur Power plant on the ground that its lender — the IFC — has cancelled its loan for the project following government's recent decision to pursue an unsolicited contract with the Japanese company "Marubeni".

At the same time, the WB has warned the government that all its future lending in the energy sector would be suspended because the decision in favour of Marubeni violated government's commitment about not pursuing new and unsolicited private power deals.

The government is now trying to resolve the deadlock with AES. AES and the government authorities are now holding meetings in a bid to make the company re-start its work, sources added.

However, the high government authorities have last week

instructed the Power Development Board (PDB) to speed up negotiations with Marubeni over the Meghnaghata-2 project.

AES began Haripur constructions from April, with its own fund as it could not finalise the financial arrangements. It was negotiating the loan with IFC, which had agreed to provide the loan on the condition that the WB would give it a "risk guarantee".

The WB, on the other hand, agreed to provide the risk guarantee on the condition that Bangladesh would not pursue new private power projects as it

was already pursuing various private power schemes equivalent to 1330 MW. WB also made Bangladesh commit other terms that included restrictions on unsolicited deals.

AES' decision to stop all construction at the Haripur project site was seen as a "threat" to Bangladesh, PDB sources said.

This is a blackmail and a violation of agreement. AES cannot stop construction on the plea that the World Bank has refused it a guarantee," said a source, "our contract does not

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Jakarta drama pacifies protesters



Sukarnoputri takes vice-presidency to new heights

JAKARTA, Oct 21: Popular opposition leader Megawati Sukarnoputri was elected Indonesia's vice president today, one day after she lost the first free and contested presidential vote in the country's history, reports AP.

"I thank God for this, and I will do my best for the republic of Indonesia," Megawati said, as a crowd of lawmakers burst into cheers and sang the national anthem.

The vote in the People's Consultative Assembly, the country's highest legislative body, was 396 for Megawati and 284 for the leader of the Muslim United Development Party, Hamzah Haz.

The victory seemed certain to end a rash of violent, anti-government protests that broke out after Megawati lost the presidential ballot yesterday.

For the first time in days, not a single protest was reported in the capital of Jakarta.

However, the main tourist island of Bali, a Megawati stronghold, was wracked by unrest even as the legislative vote was under way.

Thousands of Megawati supporters set buildings on fire and barricaded the only road into

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High court has 8 more judges

The President, in consultation with the Chief Justice, has appointed eight Additional Judges of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court for a two-year term, an official handout said in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

The newly appointed judges are: Mohammad Abdur Rashid, Advocate Bangladesh Supreme Court, Khademul Islam Chowdhury, Advocate Bangladesh Supreme Court, Mohammad Momtaz Uddin Ahmed, Advocate Bangladesh Supreme Court, Surendra Kumar Sinha, Advocate Bangladesh Supreme Court, Mohammad Abdul Wahab Miah, Advocate Bangladesh Supreme Court, Sikdar Moqbul Haque, Acting Secretary, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Mohammad Abdus Salam, Solicitor (Joint Secretary), Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs and Mohammad Arayessuddin, Joint Secretary Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.

Neither stable, prosperous nor democratic' But US diplomat rules out isolating Pakistan

WASHINGTON, Oct 21: Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Karl F Inderfurth told the annual conference of the US India Council on Tuesday that the United States is "not walking away from Pakistan because a stable, democratic and prosperous Pakistan is in the interest of India and the United States," reports USIS.

Pakistan now is neither stable, prosperous nor democratic," Inderfurth said. He added that the US last week cut off economic and military aid to Pakistan as a result of the military coup.

Inderfurth welcomed the announcement by Pakistan's military chief Musharraf in his speech to the nation that Pakistan would withdraw from Kashmir to international borders. However, the US official suggested that the army might want to withdraw further to the Line of Control that was the boundary before Pakistan's incursions into Kargil.

As Acting State Department Spokesman James Foley said earlier in the day, "we have important areas on which we need to work with Pakistan." Among them are promoting talks with India and trying to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Inderfurth said. "Democracy must be restored to Pakistan. Long-term military control is unacceptable," Senator Sam Brownback, chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Near Eastern and Southern Asian Affairs, told the conference.

On relations with India,

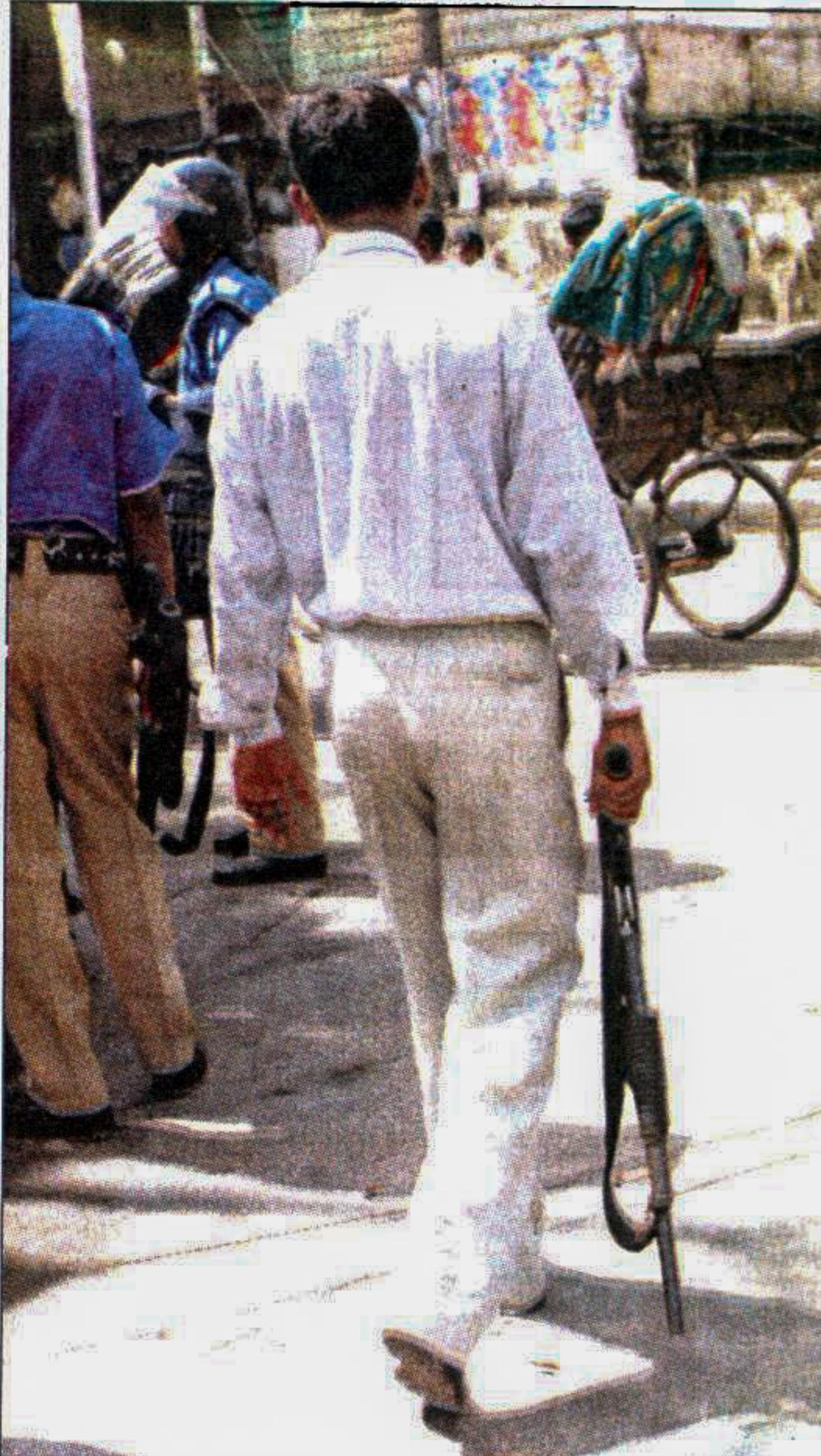
SEC directive to bourses

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) yesterday directed the Dhaka Stock Exchange and the Chittagong Stock Exchange to make appropriate amendment to their trading rules or any other rules in order to stop trading of allotment letters through the Exchange system, reports BSS.

These directives should be compiled within 24 hours from the date of receipt of this order, a press release issued by the SEC Executive Director Anwarul Kabir Bhuiyan said.

We want all opposition parties in the current anti-government agitation. Any opposition

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Enforcer anonymous

Who was the man out on the streets with a shotgun, wondered many. He was reportedly a policeman. Regulation says a cop cannot carry a gun if not in uniform. Why did he?

— Star photo: A K M Mohsin

Hasina says she never pledged to repeal SPA

SYDNEY, Oct 21: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said that she had never made any commitment to scrap the Special Powers Act (SPA), reports UNB.

She said the previous regimes of Zia, Ershad and Khaleda as well as caretaker governments of Justice Shahabuddin and Justice Habibur Rahman had admitted that the law was needed to rule the country.

The Prime Minister made this comment while responding to various questions from expatriate Bangladeshis at a reception accorded to her at Wentworth Hotel in Sydney this evening.

She categorically said change of state power would take place only with people's vote in the next election, not by any other means.

Hasina, who flew back here from Australian capital Can-

berra in the afternoon, reiterated that her government would hand over power to a neutral caretaker government on completion of her term.

Referring to the opposition leader's rejection of her offer for discussion to solve the problem they have raised, she said if the opposition believed in democracy, they could not turn down the dialogue offer.

She said the people were confused about demand of the opposition parties, who are spearheading an anti-government movement. "They are just skipping from one point demand to another, as they don't know what they want."

Narrating her government's policy in economic and social sectors to improve the living standard of the people, the Prime Minister said she has a vision to eradicate poverty by 2020.

I am confident that

Bangladesh would emerge as a poverty and illiteracy-free nation by the 2020.

Hasina said her government had ensured freedom of the judiciary and set up Commission to ensure a corruption-free dynamic administration.

In reply to a question, she said corruption plagued the nation following military rule before she came to power. "We are trying hard to stamp out corruption from the administration and society."

"I don't need to commit any corruption as I do not have any ambition... During my rule none can raise the allegation of corruption against my government," she said, adding that even one per cent of corruption was not reported during and after the devastating floods last year.

In reply to a question about delay in execution of the verdict

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Gory tale retold

Another hartal, another procession, another explosion and another rickshaw-puller — the same tale gets retold every time. On the list of injured, this time around, there was our photo journalist Amran Hossain.

— Star photo

In fear

By Staff Correspondent

Three senior BNP leaders took part in picketing during yesterday's dawn-to-dusk hartal with bullet-proof jackets on.

The leaders are: Major Gen (Retd) ZA Khan, a member on the BNP Chairperson's Advisory Council; Whip Joynal Abedin Farug MP and Ehsanul Haq Milon MP.

Of the three, Joynal Abedin Farug has been using the jacket during hartal days for quite some time now while the rest traded it out for the first time yesterday.

Talking to The Daily Star, one of the trio, preferring anonymity, said he wore the bullet-proof vest underneath his T-shirt in apprehension of getting shot either by the Awami League terrorists or police.

He said the police and AL terrorists attacked and fired indiscriminately in previous hartals and other programmes that left many people injured.

"I use the jacket, especially on hartal days, in fear of attack," he added.

Another said that he had purchased the jacket while in London a few months back.

Dawn-to-dusk hartal in Ctg on Sunday

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Oct 21: The opposition parties today announced a dawn-to-dusk hartal on Sunday in greater Chittagong to protest against what they said police attack on the Jame Mosque at Andar Killa during today's hartal.

Opposition programme

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance yesterday announced a 10-day action programme, including demonstration and road march, beginning Saturday with the objective of further intensifying the current one-point 'oust government' movement.

The programmes include countrywide mass contact to mobilise people's support in favour of opposition's demand from October 23-26 and demonstration road march throughout the country on October 23. Programmes will also be organised to protest against attack on opposition in Chittagong and 'party and state terrorism' during yesterday's hartal, and two-day road march on October 31 to November 1.

BNP representative in the Liaison Committee Anwar Zaidi announced the programmes on behalf of the 4-party and 7-party alliance at a press briefing at the BNP central office yesterday evening.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will lead her party's two-day road march to greater Sylhet from Dhaka.

BNP will organise rally at Paltan Maidan on the occasion of the Demonstration Day on Oct 25.

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said people of the country have once again expressed their 'no-confidence' in the Awami League government.

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