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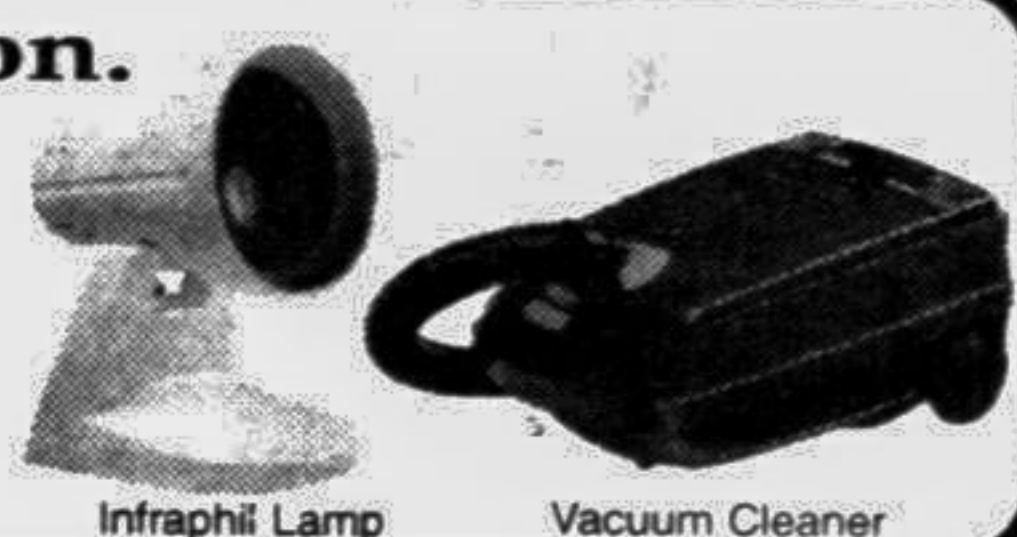
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Baghabari barge-mounted power plant

'Petrobangla never committed to provide higher-pressure gas'

Star Report

Petrobangla yesterday refuted a claim of Baghabari Westmont barge-mounted power plant authorities that the government was failing to provide the plant higher-pressure gas supply and that as a result the plant could not continue operations.

Petrobangla in a press release said the government never committed to provide higher-pressure gas to Westmont. Rather, it had committed to supply the plant with a standard '150 PSIG' pressure to Westmont. Accordingly, Petrobangla has already installed all necessary infrastructure at Baghabari to avail the gas to Westmont.

Westmont's 100 MW power plant was partially completed three months ago. From then, it has been generating around 70 MW power using tax-free imported fuel oil. As per contract, the company was supposed to set up a gas pressure converter within 90 days of commissioning of the plant so that imported fuel oil can be replaced with cheap locally produced natural gas, sources said.

This deadline expired last week. From now on, the Power Development Board (PDB) which was supplying the imported oil to Westmont, would not provide the oil.

But due to shortage of funds, Westmont could not install the gas converter in its plant till date. As a result, it can not take the gas from Petrobangla though it is available now.

The converter is required as the power plant consumes gas

supply at a pressure of over 350 PSIG -- more than double the standard gas pressure in the country.

Instead of shouldering the blame, Westmont started claiming that Petrobangla had committed to provide it with gas with 350 PSIG.

Petrobangla in the press release clarified that in order to avail gas to Baghabari area in Sirajganj, the government has installed 74 km of transmission and 56 km of distribution pipeline extending from Tangail's Alenga through the Bangabandhu Bridge. Petrobangla has also installed a City Gate Station at

Baghabari to supply gas to Westmont power house.

Considering the country's gas transmission network condition and for the sake of better maintenance of the country's gas network, the government has decided to make 150 PSIG a standard pressure for gas supply to power plants, said the press release. If the pressure was increased further, the gas pressure during peak hours would decrease and as a result many power plants and fertilizer factories may trip.

Petrobangla observed that Westmont's claim in this regard was totally against its contract.

'Silent procession' by Dhaka College students

By DU Correspondent

Different students' organisations of Dhaka College yesterday jointly brought out a 'silent procession' on the campus to protest what they alleged crimes, autocracy and misbehavior on the part of the principal.

The college authorities, however, denied the allegations and accused the student leaders of creating unrest on the campus.

A group of BCL leaders on Wednesday locked the main gate of the college holding the teachers and students hostage for about an hour.



Alamgir murder

Case against Shikdar, 4 others filed

From Our Correspondent

MAGURA, Oct 27: After primary verification of the petition in connection with abduction and killing of Alamgir, a regular case (No 7) has been lodged with Sreepur thana of the district accusing Ershad Shikdar and four his accomplices.

The SP has directed DB of Magura to investigate the case.

According to the FIR, Alamgir Reza Chowdhury, a contractor enlisted with Police Department, was killed between August 8 and 20 in 1994 after he was abducted from village Sarongdia under Sreepur thana of Magura district allegedly by 'Jamal' Farooque, 'Teko' Aziz, Liakat Lashkar, and Abdul Barik Sheikh. Mahfuzur Rahman Chowdhury, nephew of the victim, on October 21, submitted a petition case (No 1016/99) to the First Class Magistrate's court of Magura 'Kha' area. Magistrate Mokhesur Rahman directed police to take lawful step in this connection. Sreepur thana police after investigation filed a regular case yesterday.

6 accomplices of Ershad Shikdar held in Pirojpur

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Oct 27: Police arrested six accomplices of terrorist Ershad Shikdar from Mulgram village under Sadar thana of Pirojpur last night. The arrested are Kanchan Ali Sheikh, 45, Tajul Islam, 44, Alamgir Hossain alias Sohel, 24, Abdul Sheikh, 32, Selim Sheikh, 35, and Sohan Sheikh, 22.

They were handed over to Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) by the Police Super of Pirojpur this afternoon.

DU Paribesh Parishad meets today

By DU Correspondent

A meeting of the Paribesh Parishad (Environment Council) of Dhaka University will be held on the campus today to discuss ways to keep final year examinations of the university out of the purview of strike and hartal.

The meeting will also discuss the untoward incident that took place on the campus following DU authorities' decision to hold the scheduled second year final examinations on October 13 and 14 despite student strikes at the university.

Sources said that the university authorities would ask the student leaders to keep the final year examinations out of the purview of all strikes and hartals in future.

DU Vice-Chancellor Prof A K Azad Chowdhury will preside over the meeting at the Conference Room of the Administrative Building at 12.30 pm.

Meanwhile, BNP-backed Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) has decided to boycott the meeting for alleged failure of DU authorities to take steps against the police personnel and BCL activists responsible for attack on the JCD activists during the strike.

EC may announce schedule today

Election of three city corps on Dec 6

Star Report

The Election Commission (EC) is likely to announce the schedule for the election of three city corporations today, EC sources said.

Election of Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi city corporations will be held on December 6, the sources said.

The date for submission of nomination papers for the polls is November 8, while the date for withdrawal of nomination papers November 16.

As per law, the deadline for holding polls of the four city corporations is December 27.

The Commission, however, has not yet fixed the date for elections to the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), because a case is still pending with the High Court concerning the delimitation of certain wards of the DCC.

However, the EC had written to the mainstream political parties to exchange views on various issues relating to elections of the Upazila Parishads and city corporation bodies.

Leaders of the ruling Awami

League and its partners in the government, Jatiya Party led by Anwar Hossain Monju and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal of A S M as well as the Left Democratic Front (LDF) responded positively to the EC's invitation.

The AL delegation suggested that the elections to the city corporations should be held before the holy month of Ramadan, beginning in the second week of November. They also requested the EC to hold Upazila polls after the holy Ramadan.

The JSD and the JP told the EC to hold both the Upazila and the City Corporation polls before the Ramadan. The LDF leaders requested the government to make the polls 'meaningful by accommodating all the political parties'.

On the other hand, the mainstream opposition parties including the BNP rejected the EC's invitation. They have announced their decision to boycott all elections under the present EC headed by Abu Hena.

Faridpur-4 byelection: Peaceful but lifeless

By Nurul Kabir, back from Faridpur

The parliamentary by-election in Faridpur-4 (Sadarpur-Chandradhara) constituency was peacefully held yesterday. It was, however, a lifeless affair.

With the mainstream opposition parties including BNP staying away from the polls, the electoral race turned out to be a one-sided exercise. There was no enthusiasm among voters.

Turnout of voters was thin. The crew of state-run BTB had to seek cooperation of the ruling Awami League activists and local officials to shoot 'voters' standing in queues.

They managed to video a queue at Babur Char High School polling centre 11:20 am. But moments after, the so-called voters disappeared.

Some election observers told newsmen that voters' turnout would be between 30 and 35 per cent.

Election Commissioner

Shingra poura polls today

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, Oct 27: The election of newly-made Shingra Pourashava of the district will be held tomorrow.

Besides necessary arrangements, tight security has been taken to ensure a peaceful election.

There are eight candidates for the chairman post, 45 candidates for nine commissioner posts and 10 women for three female commissioner posts. Voting will be held from 8 am to 4 pm.

Injured BCL leader of Nalitabari dies in city

SHERPUR, Oct 27: Another Chhatra League leader, who was injured in Monday's violence in Nalitabari thana, died on way to Suhrawardy Hospital in Dhaka Tuesday night, reports UNB.

Hospital sources said Abul Kalam Azad Chokon, the thana unit President of BCL was critically wounded during a clash between two factions of the ruling party's student wing that also left BCL leader Yusuf dead.

Chokon was sent to Bagabandhu Medical University from Mymensingh Medical College on Tuesday and was being shifted to Suhrawardy Hospital. He died at midnight.

Biman's 'late' explanation

By Special Correspondent

Bangladesh Biman has cancelled its New York flights BG 011 on February 22 and BG009 on February 26 owing to what it said, 'unavoidable circumstances'.

The passengers booked on the flights, have been requested to report to the nearest Biman sales counter on the working days for their re-booking on rescheduled flights, a Biman press release said yesterday.

But it neither said when the flights would be available, nor explained the 'unavoidable circumstances'.

Aviation sources said that the New York flights have been cancelled on the two days as the Biman is diverting the aircraft scheduled for the flights to ferry Hajj pilgrims.

The pilgrims are making their journey by Biman on February 23, the sources said. The disruptions have been caused by a delay in receiving two Boeing-777 aircraft it chartered from a US company, they added.

Groom children to face challenges of 21st century: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government wants to ensure a peaceful environment for unhindered and undisturbed flourishing of the talents and mental growth of children to groom themselves as worthy citizens, reports UNB.

"I am handing over Bangladesh to you. By building yourself as worthy citizens, you will build a beautiful country, the Sonar Bangla," she told the children addressing the national conference of Khelaghar at the Shishu Academy here in the morning.

Members of Khelaghar from across the country, attired in white dress and red scarf, joined the function under a big pandal on the Shishu Academy premises and demanded an environment where all rights of children will be fulfilled.

Khelaghar central committee chairman Prof Ali Asgar, general secretary Abdul Aziz, and a little girl, Nipa, also spoke at the function.

The Prime Minister said: "We want a peaceful environment, a beautiful environment, where the children will get the scope to be groomed properly. Our target is to develop the children to build the country as a developed nation. We will have to prepare the golden boys to build the Golden Bengal."

She said the present world is a world of competition, the world of science and technology, and the world of computers and information technology.

"We will have to groom our children in such a manner so that they can easily face the challenges of the coming century," she said seeking help from all in this regard.

Pollution: DOE to sue 23 industrial units

The Department of Environment (DOE) will file cases against 23 industrial units for causing pollution and take actions against black smoke emitting vehicles, a Jatiya Sangsad press release said in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

It said this was informed at a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on Environment and Forest Ministry with its chairman Alhaj Mohammad Tabibur Rahman in the chair.

The meeting was also told that under the UNDP-sponsored Sustainable Environment Management Programme (SEMP) a project was underway to develop waste disposal systems in rural weaving and dyeing units.

Bomb hoax

By Staff Correspondent

Another bomb hoax created panic in the city's Mohammadpur area early yesterday, police said.

With this there were five such false alarms in the city since the recovery of explosives from the Janakantha office and a mosque in the city on October 8.

Police failed to identify who were involved in these fake alerts.

Talks with diplomat over tea is no protest

Khaleda slams AL's 'subservient' attitude

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia said yesterday that a serious unrest was now prevailing along the border with India and that people living in those areas were feeling insecure in the wake of frequent attacks and killings by Indian forces.

Violation of land and air space has also become an everyday affair, she said, but the government is reluctant to even protest such incidents strongly.

"After an incident, the Foreign Ministry is calling the diplomat of that country and entertaining him with tea. No strong protest has so far been lodged against the attackers," she said.

Speaking at a meeting marking the 21st founding anniversary of Jubo Dal at Engineers Institute, she said factories have been set up across the border on the Indian side to produce phensidyl, arms and forged currencies with the motive to destroy the young generation and image of Bangladesh in the international community.

"Besides, pornographic magazines and other harmful materials have flooded the country."

The Leader of the Opposition in Parliament alleged the government had prepared a blueprint to stay in power permanently and make Bangladesh subservient to a certain country.

"All government activities in the last three and a half years have clearly proved that it wants to sell out the country's independence and sovereignty to others."

In an obvious reference to India, Khaleda Zia said: "That country is trying to grab Bangladesh the way they grabbed Sikkim and using the ruling Awami League for that purpose. To fulfil the desire of that country, the government has already handed over one tenth of Bangladesh through signing agreement with the tribal insurgents."

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With this there were five such false alarms in the city since the recovery of explosives from the Janakantha office and a mosque in the city on October 8.

Police failed to identify who were involved in these fake alerts.

Quoting press reports, she said more than one lakh Indian citizens have already settled in Chittagong Hill Tracts driving away the Bangladeshi people. "The agreement has destabilised the situation in the CHT rather than bringing peace and that non-tribal people and even the army jawans are now being victims of repression by the terrorists."

Khaleda Zia said the present government now enjoyed nobody's trust -- at home or abroad. "Because it has betrayed with both the countrymen and the foreigners."

She said the government was committed to ensuring good governance, accountability, transparency and implementing reforms, but failed miserably. "The government forgets its commitment to the people, but is very sincere about meeting the pledges to its masters."

Presided over by Jubo Dal president Mirza Abbas, it was addressed among others by Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Dr Khondaker Mosharraf Hossain, Moudud Ahmed, Khondaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed, Tariqul Islam, Sadek Hossain Khoka MP, Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Moazzem Hossain Alal and Mahbubul Alam Tara.

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We look forward to seeing you!

Announcement

The Daily Star will honour students with outstanding results in their 'O' and 'A' level examinations this year.

For this purpose we are inviting candidates who sat for these examinations for the session June '98-June '99 to register their names at The Daily Star office. Candidates who appeared privately are requested to register at The Daily Star office. Those who appeared from schools are requested to contact their respective schools directly or can register their names at The Daily Star.

The criteria to be fulfilled to qualify for registration are as follows:-

(1) For 'O' level:-

a) Minimum Six A's in two consecutive sittings (June '98 to June '99).

(2) For 'A' level:-

a) Minimum three A's in two consecutive sittings (June '98 to June '99).

(3) Physically challenged students who appeared at the above mentioned examinations and qualify through their achievements will be given special awards.

Eligible students are requested to contact Ms. Raffat Binte Rashid at The Daily Star office with their original individual candidate statement of results (along with photocopy) on Thursday 28.10.99 and on Saturday 30.10.99 between 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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