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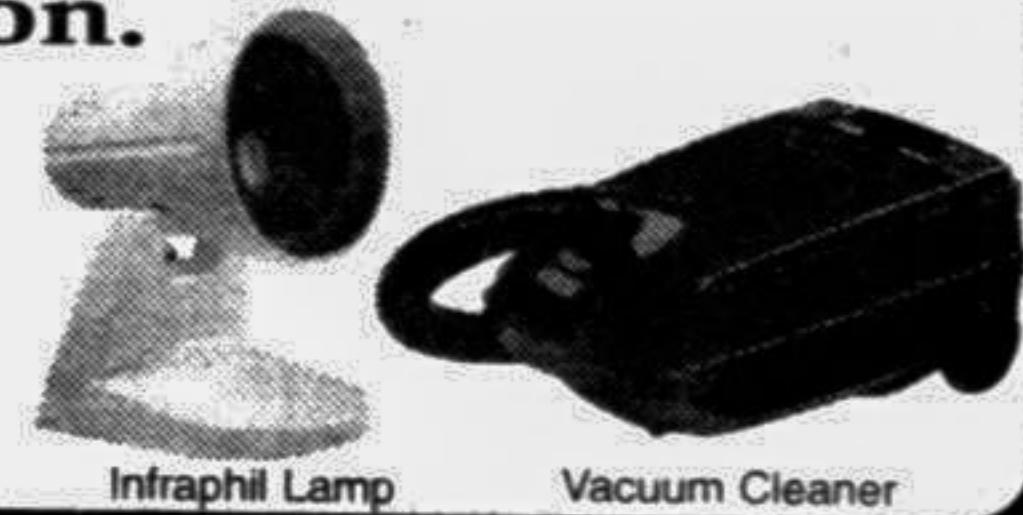
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**Westmont failed for lack of gas converter**

By Staff Correspondent

The Westmont Baghabari barge-mounted private power plant has been shut down early this week as the company failed to set up its fuel facilities as per agreement with the Power Development Board (PDB).

Sources said that in addition to the company's failure to install a gas pressure converter system at the power plant to use cheap local gas as its raw material, Westmont could not supply the amount of power as per agreement in the last three months.

A PDB source said that Westmont was supposed to set up a 90 MW plant. But its plant was actually generating maximum 83 MW power till it was shut down.

Besides, the Westmont plant was set up for a 15 year term, at an unauthorised and awkward location near the Baghabari inland port. Sources said that due to the installation of the plant there, instead of a PDB recommended site, future expansion plan of the country's only inland port has been jeopardised.

The Malaysian company that built the power plant was commissioned three months ago. Since then, the PDB was supplying it with tax-free im-

ported fuel oil as the plant's raw material for a three months period. After this period, Westmont was supposed to equip this plant with a gas pressure converter to use gas as its raw material.

According to insiders, Westmont could not arrange the gas converter during the stipulated period that expired late last month due to lack of finance. The gas conversion system requires an investment of around 20 million dollars, sources pointed out.

The gas converter was necessary because the local gas is supplied at a pressure of 150 PGSI while the Westmont plant requires a gas pressure of 350 PGSI.

"We can no longer afford Westmont's fuel supply, by subsidising its imported fuel, we are incurring a huge loss," said a PDB source. "Besides, Westmont's power was as costly as US cents per unit, whereas, other barge mount plants charge 5.5 cents and our sales rate is around 5 cents."

The source added that once Westmont's plant started using gas, the power tariff would come down below 5 cents per unit.

3 alleged muggers held in city

By Staff Correspondent

Three alleged muggers were arrested from the city's Dhamondi area yesterday afternoon.

Dhamondi police arrested them while they were passing through the road in front of Bangabandhu museum at about 2:30 pm, police said. They were accused of mugging gold ornaments and other valuables.

Sergeant Khairullah led the operation and arrested the alleged muggers chasing their autorickshaw in which they were traveling.

Earlier on October 28, sergeant Ahad Parvez was stabbed to death by the muggers when he chased a gang fleeing in a tempo near the Shapla Chattar at Motijheel in the city.

The arrested were identified as Sukkur Miah, 25, Selim, 28 and Rana 28. A gold chain and knives were recovered from them.

Hartal observed protesting arrest of 'Chora' Aziz

By Staff Correspondent

A half-day hartal was observed yesterday at Dholakhal under Sutrapur thana in the city protesting the arrest of Aziz, a local BNP leader.

He was arrested on Tuesday on charge of trading in smuggled motor vehicle spares.

The hartal was peaceful, Sutrapur police said.

Aziz, wanted in 18 cases lodged with different police stations in the city, was produced before the CMM's court yesterday, police said.

When contacted, Sadek Hussain Khoka, Convener of Dhaka city BNP told The Daily Star that police brought fabricated charges against Aziz only to tarnish his image.

The "peaceful hartal" hartal shows his "popularity" in the area, Khoka said and demanded his immediate release.

After his arrest at about 8 pm on Tuesday, Aziz locally known as *chora* (thief) Aziz, was taken to Motijheel police station for "safety reasons", police said.

His arrest sparked off violent protest in the area since Tuesday night. Some shops were ransacked and tyres burnt on some streets in the area.

Power sector

From page 1

It will also supervise management and administration of affairs of licensees and look into consumer disputes and unfair trade practices. It will adjudicate disputes and differences among the licensees and consumers as per provisions of the Act.

Besides, the commission will also co-ordinate with environmental regulatory agencies for healthy growth of the power sector without degrading the environment and regulate development and operation of renewable energy and nuclear power plants.

The Act also paves way for setting up a new company — Ashugan Power Company — that will be owned by the Power Development Board (PDB). The company will own the five power plants built by the PDB with German assistance, which are currently generating 568 MW of power.

The company will sell power from these plants to PDB. It will bear the maintenance costs from its earnings.

All PDB owned power plants are now dependent on budgetary approval for their maintenance. As the process is slow, no power plant actually receives timely finances for maintenance.

"Maybe we'll put them be-



Bangladesh batsman Al-Shahrier executes an exquisite square-cut during his brilliant knock of 73 against England A at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

— Star photo by Amran Hossain

Sinha: Hartal

From page 1
ding export business of Sonali Bank, made at a press conference earlier, was correct. He contradicted the bank's statement made at a recent board meeting with finance ministry.

BCMEA earlier claimed that SB's export business dropped to Tk 700 crore in the first seven months of current fiscal year from Tk 2001 in the last fiscal year, mainly due to its "non-co-operation" with garment exporters. But the SB told the finance ministry at the recent meeting that it did Tk 3687 crore export business in the last fiscal year and Tk 909 crore in the first seven months of this fiscal.

"It (SB) realised our problems and came up with fresh proposals after we drew government's attention regarding non-cooperation by banks," Sinha claimed.

He hoped that more than 100 closed garment factories will be able to start business soon if Sonali Bank reschedules their loans as per a Bangladesh Bank directive.

Sinha reiterated his earlier demand for setting up of an apparel board, allocation of land for a Garments Palli near Dhaka-Chittagong highway, improvement of goods handling system at ports and round the way bank, customs and port facilities.

Sinha said Bangladeshi ready made garments will enter into Japanese and Australian markets soon. Australia is considering offering zero tariff facility to Bangladeshi garments.

On economic assistance, Azad appreciating Canada's contribution to the developmental activities of Bangladesh and urged the Canadian Minis-

ter to increase Canadian ODA.

The Canadian Foreign Minister assured that his government would consider more assistance to Bangladesh from next year.

The foreign minister stressed the need for annual consultation at the Foreign Secretary level and regular exchange of high level visits. He extended invitation to his counterpart to visit Bangladesh and also conveyed the invitation of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh to the Canadian Prime Minister.

He was leading a bilateral talks with Canadian Foreign Minister Moyd Axworthy here yesterday. Bangladesh High Commissioner to Canada M Aminul Islam and Director General SK Sharif Hassan, Canadian Foreign Minister's Special Assistant Ms S Christianson, Assistant Deputy Minister Joseph Caron and Deputy Director, South Asia Division Ben Gaylor were present.

Axworthy assured Azad of considering the request.

Azad said that relations and contacts between the two countries were established by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman when he visited Canada in 1973 to attend the Commonwealth Summit.

He briefed his counterpart of the programmes undertaken by the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina especially how the democratic institution and rule of law are being established by her government.

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Canada urged to raise garments quota, ODA for Bangladesh

OTTAWA, Nov 3: Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad hoped that volume of bilateral trade between Dhaka and Ottawa would be expanded further and called his counterpart to help enhance the readymade garments quota for Bangladesh to facilitate better market access, reports BSS.

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Supporters of 'Chora' Aziz observed hartal setting fire to tyres in Dolaikhali area in the old part of the city yesterday.

— Star photo

Pak military ruler orders crackdown on corruption

ISLAMABAD, Nov 3: Pakistan's military ruler General Pervez Musharraf said today loan defaulters will face jail terms under a crackdown on corruption starting this month, reports AFP.

"We will crack down on the first group of people and things will start from November 17," Musharraf told the official Associated Press of Pakistan in an interview.

Musharraf, who overthrew prime minister Nawaz Sharif in a bloodless coup on October 12, has put the assault on corruption high on his agenda.

The general has promised to set up new courts to handle corruption cases and has encouraged people to inform authorities about abuses.

He said the courts would be ready by November 17 and lists of suspects were now being drawn up.

"We will put them be-

hind bars, they should be prepared," he told the state news agency.

"They should not think that we are in any way lacking in resolve. They will see immediate action on November 17."

Much of the corruption in Pakistan stems from loan defaulters, who borrowed from banks with little or no collateral and siphoned the money away, sometimes into overseas bank accounts.

"We have seen the total lists of defaulters and plunders. There are many kinds of plunders, and I will call them plunders of the national wealth," Musharraf said.

"There are people who have manipulated rules and regulations and made money."

He offered to start the ball rolling by revealing his assets, which included several pieces of property in rural and urban areas of the country.

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