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JS question-answer session
Power crisis to end by fiscal 2003-04, hopes Rafiq

State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources Prof Rafiqul Islam yesterday expressed hope that power crisis in the country will be solved by fiscal 2003-04, report agencies.

Under the long term Vision Statement of the government, electricity will be made available at every corner of the country by 2020, he told Parliament replying to a question from Aleya Afroz (AL-Women seat). Regarding implementation of the power system master plan for a permanent solution of the power crisis, the state minister said that the government has so far taken initiatives to set up new power plants with a total capacity of 4,487 megawatts (MW).

Out of these, 2,238 MW of power plants will be set up through private sector and 2,249 MW under government initiative.

He said that since coming to power, the present government has so far raised power generation by 1,256 MW through public and private sector initiatives.

Besides, he informed, the process to set up small scale 10-MW power plants both in the public and private sectors, and solar and bio-gas power generation units is under implementation.

On a supplementary from Prof. Mohammad Shahjahan of AL from Sirajganj, Prof. Rafiqul Islam said the total number subscribers of power was 26 lakh in the past. The present government has so far given connections to 12.49 lakh subscribers which is almost half again over the number during the last regime.

Replying to another question from Shah Hadiuzzaman of AL from Jessore, the State minister for power said the recoverable gas reserve in the country was 10.06 TCF to be used till the year 2015.

On supplementaries from Noor Mohammad Mondal, Razia Matin Chowdhury and Mohammad Shamsul Huq, Prof. Rafiqul Islam said the Petrobangla has signed a pro-

duction sharing contract with Unocal having a 10 per cent stake.

Referring to a news item published yesterday on the signing of PSC with Unocal, the state minister for energy said there should be no confusion that Unocal will not go for production within the next five years.

"The reality is if a market is available tomorrow, Unocal will go for production tomorrow," he said.

He, however, underscored the need for setting up new gas-based power plants, fertiliser factories and agro industries to create a broader market for gas utilisation.

Replying to a supplementary, Prof Rafiqul Islam said that the present reserve of gas was estimated at 10.06 trillion cubic feet (TCF), which would meet the requirement till 2015.

The government however has no plan to export gas, he said replying to Shah Hadiuzzaman of Awami League.



Bangladesh Ambassador to France Syed Muazzem Ali who is also concurrently accredited to Portugal, presented his credentials to President of Portugal Jorge Fernando Branco De Sampaio at a colourful ceremony at the Belem Palace in Lisbon recently.

ADB to continue funding for agri-projects: Chino

The visiting President of Asian Development Bank (ADB) Tadao Chino in a meeting with Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury at her office yesterday discussed matters of mutual interest particularly in agriculture sector, reports UNB.

ADB funded projects, future planning for agricultural development, pipeline of ADB projects and simplification of procedures regarding the processing of ADB's fund also came up for discussion in the meeting, said an official handout.

The Agriculture Minister told Chino that the government has decided to continue the ADB aided recently completed projects like North-East Minor Irrigation Project (first phase) and Horticulture Development Project (first phase) as those projects were proved to be effective and successful.

The minister sought ADB fund for establishing National Plan Genetic Resource Institute, North-East Minor Irrigation Project-2nd phase, Horticulture Development-2nd phase project and North-West Agricultural Development Project.

The ADB President assured continuous help and assistance in agriculture sector of Bangladesh. ADB President reiterated that eradication of poverty in the underdeveloped countries is the goal of ADB.

ADB is one of the development partners in agricultural sector of Bangladesh. The Bank provided credit for the development of minor irrigation and horticulture in Bangladesh.

At present the ADB agreed in principle to finance commercial horticulture development

including production, processing and marketing of high value and diversified horticulture crops with a greater participation of private sector.

ADB's Alternate Executive Director M Faizur Razaque, Additional Secretary of Agriculture M Rafiqul Alam and delegation members of ADB's President were present during the meeting.

BSS adds: ADB President Tadao Chino lauded Bangladesh's progress in the communications sector and assured of ADB's cooperation in the further development of communications infrastructures.

Chino was discussing the progress of ADB-funded projects with Communications Minister Anwar Hossain whom he met at his office in the city yesterday.

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, AUSTRALIA

Advertisements have previously appeared in newspapers from the Australia-Canada Consulting Group inviting students to apply for admission to Victoria University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia in TAFE, diploma, under graduate, graduate and post-graduate courses.

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- (b) to Dhaka office of IDP Education Australia; or
- (c) to the office of the University's authorised study Centre in Dhaka, BETS Victoria Limited (BVL).

Leukaemia unit at CMCH

CHITTAGONG, Apr 3: A leukaemia treatment unit has been set up at the children's ward of Chittagong Medical College Hospital for extending treatment facilities to the children suffering from blood cancer.

Chairman of Children's Leukaemia Assistance and Support Services (CLASS) Osman Gani Mansur told BSS here that leukaemia treatment unit at CMCH has created an opportunity for treatment of children suffering from the silent killer disease leukaemia.

We felt the need for leukaemia treatment facilities and with the help of doctors and philanthropists we have been able to create the same, Mansur said adding we have also set up a play corner for leukaemia patients at the unit.

Mostly children are attacked by leukaemia for which a lengthy treatment process has to be followed. Leukaemia patients are to remain under constant care of the physicians for a long time.

Setting up of a play corner for child patients at the leukaemia unit is an added facility for the unfortunate children, Mansur said.

The play corner at the leukaemia treatment block needs expansion while there is a move for setting up of a research centre for leukaemia.

CLASS Chairman Osman Gani Mansur has appealed to the philanthropists for generous contribution expand and develop the leukaemia unit at CMCH.

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