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AES-PDB deadlock sending negative signals to investors

By Sharier Khan

The government's nonchalance for the last five months in resolving the deadlock between US power company AES and PDB over transfer of the land site for the 450 MW Meghnaghat Power Plant is sending negative signals to foreign investors in energy sector and the international financing community.

The 100 hectare land site, developed at a cost of Tk 141 crore by a Chinese contractor, has now become an unsolvable issue due to opposing stances of AES and PDB, sources said.

AES says the site has not been developed properly and it is risky to set up such a plant there.

On the other hand, PDB argues that the site has been developed properly but AES is not taking possession of the site deliberately as it could not ensure the project's finance.

Sources close to AES told The Daily Star that it was true the company — which is building a 360 MW power plant at Haripur — is yet to finalise its 'financial closing'.

"But this has got nothing to do with the company's not taking over of the project site. The project site has been declared faulty by the company's consultant and so it can not start work there," said one source. "The government's poor handling of the contract is definitely having a negative implication in the financial closing of the project."

AES has been negotiating

with some financial institutions including IFC of World Bank (WB) for financing the project. The WB-IFC last year decided not to finance the project due to "change in decisions and non-transparent handling of the power sector by the government", the source claimed. However, WB finally lifted its embargo when the government guaranteed foreign private power companies' returns from investment.

"But there has not been much positive change in the power sector. As a result, lenders are uncomfortable and we are not getting finance for many infrastructure projects in the power sector," said a PDB source.

Lending for the sector remained closed for a decade as the WB-led donor community felt that the government should first seriously try to improve performance by reducing system loss and theft of revenue. Due to serious investment crisis in the sector in the nineties, the government invited private sector investment.

"Private sector investors also have to go to the lenders. Sadly, nothing has improved and the government's handling of the private sector has been clouded with allegations of corruption and mishandling," said an official of the Energy Ministry.

The Meghnaghat power plant, scheduled to be opera-

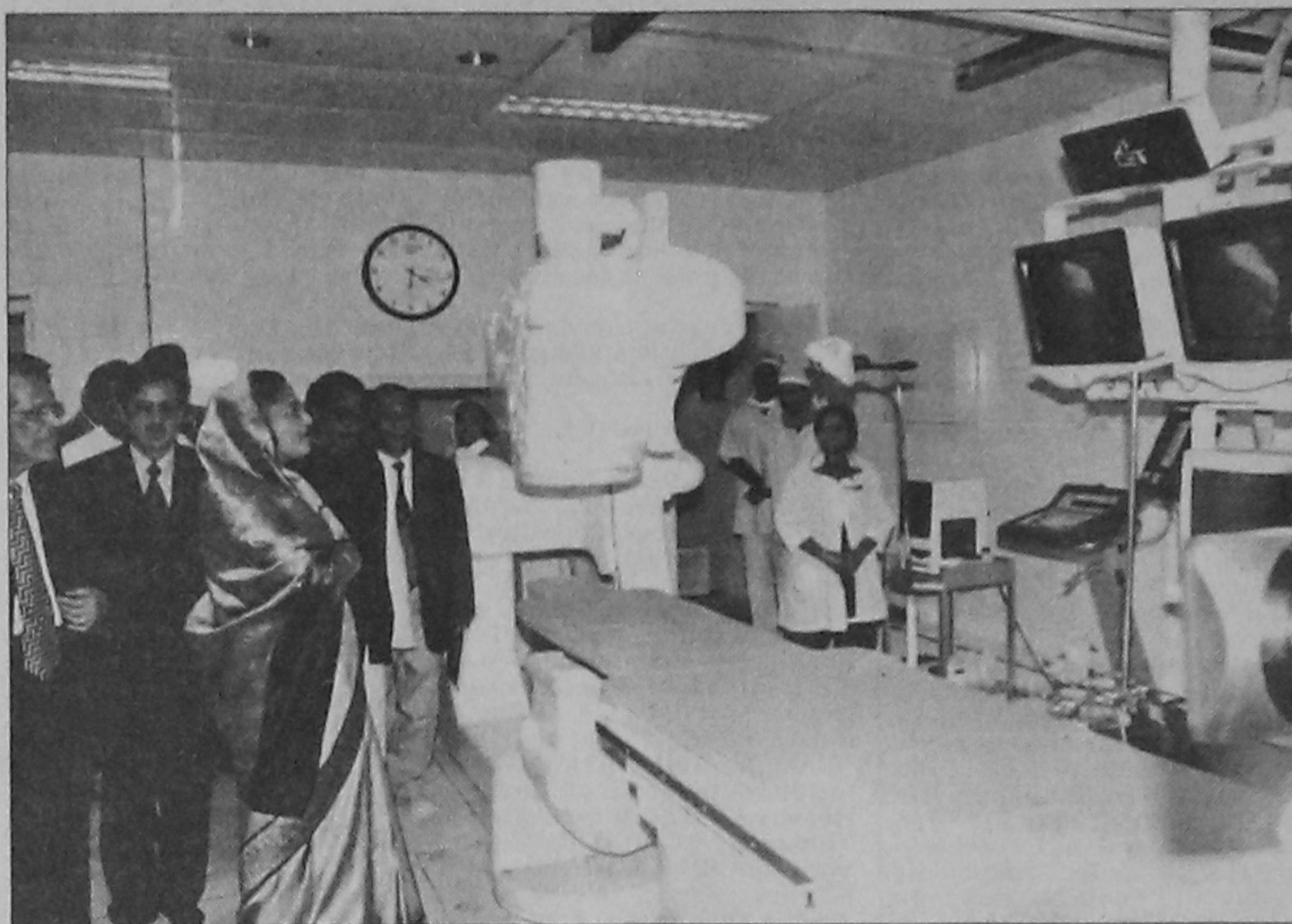
tional from early 2002, is about to collapse due to the performance of the land site developer and the consultant the official said.

"The land site developer and the consultant have common interests. Both are represented by the same local agent who was a minister in the present government. The consultant always seems to defend the contractor directly or indirectly," the official alleged.

The Chinese contractor — CWHEC — was supposed to develop and deliver the site by June 1999. Delay in hand-over is punishable with a daily fine of 20,000 dollars. The work was incomplete till December last year, but PDB claimed no compensation from CWHEC.

To put a counter-pressure on PDB, CWHEC has raised compensation claims worth crores of taka on various grounds including devaluation of Taka against Dollar, hartal and port congestion, the sources said. Though the entire project cost is paid in local currency, the project's consultant endorsed most of the claims of CWHEC.

"If the deadlock continues like this, AES may start demanding the 20,000 dollar daily compensation for delay in site delivery. It may follow a legal battle. The project may collapse after a huge wastage of local resources. Sadly, nobody seems to bother that the people would ultimately suffer," observed the ministry official.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited different sections of the 100-bed National Heart Foundation Hospital after inaugurating it at Mirpur in the city yesterday. — PID photo

PM opens Nat'l Heart Foundation Hospital

Help check trend of patients going abroad for treatment

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked physicians yesterday to be more service-oriented and ensure most modern treatment in the country to help keep patients from going abroad, reports UNB.

"Sweet behaviour and care of the doctors and nurses can heal 50 per cent of the disease of a patient. Good behaviour of the doctors can increase confidence of the patients, which helps fast cure," she said while inaugurating the National Heart Foundation Hospital at Mirpur in the afternoon yesterday.

The prime minister unveiled the plaque of the newly constructed 100-bed Heart Foundation Hospital, the biggest cardiovascular hospital at private level in the country. The government is providing the lion's share of its fund for ensuring latest cardiac service.

Set up on 27 bighas of land, it will be a 300-bed heart hospital housed in a ten-storied building. Initially, the government has provided Tk 7 crore to the hospital furnished with all the state-of-the-art equipment for cardiac surgery and treatment.

The Prime Minister said the physicians should remember that they had taken up a noble profession and provide the patients with the best possible care and modern treatment.

She told the function that the government was taking all possible steps to extend health-

care services to the people. But, she said, it is not possible for the government alone to meet a huge demand for modern health services.

So the government is encouraging private ventures in the medical service sector.

"It is true that some days ago none could even think of getting by-pass surgery at a private hospital here. To provide these facilities in the country, the present government reduced taxes on medical equipment. Now all kinds of heart operation, including bypass surgery, are being conducted in the country," she said.

Hasina said now all equipment for disease detection through diagnosis and machinery for angiogram, MRI, CT scan, lithotripsy and other equipment for operation are being imported with nominal taxes.

"All this is possible for the government's liberal policy and timely steps for building up modern health-service industry in the country."

She said the government also cut down import duties on different reagents used for diagnosis and waived taxes on some life-saving drugs, including the drugs for deadly disease like cancer.

The Prime Minister said in this newly constructed hospital there are all arrangements for open-heart surgery, closed-heart surgery, pace-making an-

giogram, other operations on heart and diagnosis of heart diseases. This hospital would stand out as a centre of excellence, she hoped.

She said the government had already approved "Health and Population Sector Strategy."

"On the basis of this strategy we have undertaken work for implementing Fifth Health and Population Programme for the development of health and population sector."

About demands of the physicians, the Prime Minister said the government had taken measures for the promotion of doctors and giving them selection grade.

"We have already appointed 2000 new doctors and completed the formalities to appoint 1000 more," she said. The government has also appointed 4000 nurses and taken step to employ more 2000 nurses.

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria, Health Minister Sheikh Fazul Karim Selim, State Minister for Social Welfare Dr Mozammel Hossain, State Minister for Health Prof M Amanullah and State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir also addressed the function.

President of the National Heart Foundation Justice Chowdhury ATM Masud presided over the function. It was also addressed by Secretary General of the Foundation Brig (ret'd) Prof Abdul Malik.

Joint rally at Rajshahi Opposition likely to announce fresh programmes today

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance partners will hold a public meeting at Rajshahi Madrasah Maidan this afternoon to mobilise public support for their demand for resignation of the government and an early national election.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Jatiya Party Chairman H M Ershad, Jamaat-e-Islami, Ameer Golam Azam and Islami Olkya Jote Chairman Azizul Haq will address the meeting.

The alliance hold similar meeting in Dhaka and Chittagong on February 13 and April 4 respectively.

Khaleda Zia is expected to announce some fresh anti-government programmes at the meeting. The BNP and JP chiefs left the capital for Rajshahi yesterday while Jamaat and IOJ chiefs will leave this morning.

The BNP Chairperson will stay overnight in Bogra prior to attending the meeting in Rajshahi.

Opposition sources said the Central Liaison Committee drafted some action programmes, including "black day" with a joint meeting in Dhaka on April 30 and countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal on May 4 to protest the ruling party's recent activities against the judges of the higher court. However, BNP chief and leader of

the opposition Khaleda Zia is yet to give go-ahead.

They said there has been a consensus on observing the proposed "black day" programme on April 30 to protest against Awami League's "stick procession" and "threat" on the judges of the higher court.

Besides, the alliance may announce some other programmes at today's meeting, including boycott of court by the lawyers and submission of a memorandum to the President.

The call for a countrywide hartal is still uncertain since BNP is reluctant to enforce hartal on the latest issue.

The CLC held a meeting at 29 Minto Road yesterday with BNP vice-chairman M Shamsul Islam MP in the chair, but it could not finalise the programmes because of differences among the alliance partners.

IOJ leader A.R.M. Abdul Matin, who is representing the party at the CLC, said a number of liaison representatives will accompany their respective party chiefs during the Rajshahi meeting and programmes will be finalised there.

Jamaat assistant secretary general Mohammad Kamruzzaman also said the next course of action programmes may be announced at today's meeting.

BIMSTEC meet tomorrow

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BIMSTEC has already decided to focus on six primary areas. The countries and the particular areas assigned for making working plans in the fields are: Bangladesh— technology; India— transport and communications; Thailand— energy; Myanmar— tourism; and Sri Lanka— fisheries.

The Delhi meeting will specially emphasise starting the Trans-Asian Railway and Highway, and take stock of the progress of the feasibility to start a regional airlines. However, it will wait for more concrete outcome expected tabled at the third BIMSTEC ministerial meeting of state ministers in New Delhi later this year.

The original grouping comprising four littoral countries of the Bay of Bengal— Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand— started off as BIMSTEC.

Later, at a ministerial meeting at Bangkok in Decem-

ber 1997, the four founding members agreed to admit Myanmar and the grouping was renamed as BIMSTEC, meaning Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand for Economic Cooperation.

The idea of the grouping was first conceived by Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India and Thailand and was initially referred to as the 'Bay of Bengal Economic Cooperation Organisation'.

The regional alliance was initiated with an aim to tap the great potential of an increased trade volume within these countries by taking advantage of the geographical proximity of the member countries of the Bay of Bengal region and also on the eastern coast of the Indian Ocean.

Bus-truck owners

From Page 1

tary of the association, addressed it.

Other leaders including G M Sirajul Haq MP, Babu Ramesh Chandra Ghosh, Abdul Latif, Abdul Hal, Zobaier Naim Humayun Kabir and Shamsuzzaman were present.

Leaders of the association said that following police operation on the 'toll houses' on roads and highways, incidents of extortion and toll collection had decreased except in some areas including Bogra and some southern districts.

They alleged that the 'syndicated extortionists' have now changed their tactics and are collecting toll from the bus owners.

They congratulated the government for removal of the toll houses and illegal establishments on the roads and highways.

Tin Bigha

From Page 1

He said India would take up the issue of extremist groups' operations allegedly from Bangladesh territory during the coming Home Secretary-level meeting.

Advani said India would also raise the issue of "infiltration" from Bangladesh at the meeting.

Termining Indo-Bangla relations as "cordial," Advani said the two countries have some problems which will be sorted out through amicable negotiations.

The Bangladesh Home Secretary is expected to arrive here tomorrow for the talks.

Judgement in Khalid Murder Case April 30

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Apr 24: Judgement in Khalid Murder Case will be delivered on April 30 by the judge of the special court.

Jubo League leader Khalid Hossain was killed on the night of May 16 last year at the Skid Ghat, Ershad Shikder and his armed cadres have been accused in the case.

Twenty accused out of 28 including Ershad Shikder were arrested in Khalid Murder Case. Thirty-four prosecution witnesses were examined. Trial began on March 2 and argument continued till today from April 18.

Among others, four senior Jubo League leaders, two business tycoons and wife of a high official of the judiciary were prosecution witnesses.

Meanwhile, police today arrested the wife of Jamal Faroque from the corridor of the special court. Police said Parul Begum, 32, was making noise while argument was going on. Her husband has already been sentenced to death in the Jamal Murder Case.

Loadshedding in N'ganj

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Apr 24: The town experienced a terrible loadshedding today.

The HSC examinees and garments factories bore the brunt of the loadshedding throughout the day.

DESA sources said, the insulator of 33 KV line of Madanpur-Khanpur was damaged by lightning. They said they were trying to solve the problem, but the situation remained unchanged till filing of this report at 9 pm.

Chernobyl virus

From Page 1

Guard and could change the date of BIOS.

More information regarding CIH virus could be obtained from CIH Virus Information Centre's Web site at WWW.datafellows.com/cih.

Computer users in Bangladesh could also get help from BCC's telephone help desk at 8614224 and 8613773 from 9:00 am to 10:00 pm in this regard, the Council said.

Wahid sacks 2 ministers after IMF meeting

JAKARTA, Apr 24: President Abdurrahman Wahid fired two key financial ministers today hours after the International Monetary Fund's top official warned him not to backslide on a commitment to reform the crisis-ridden economy, reports AP.

Trade and Industry Minister Yusuf Kalla said he and Investment Minister Laksamana Sukardi had quit. Senior officials said they had been replaced by an army general and top bureaucrat.

"The president has asked me and Laksamana Sukardi to resign because the economic team in the Cabinet was not cooperating well," said Kalla.

Senior IMF officials de-

clined to comment. Two other economic ministers remain in place.

It was fourth time Wahid has replaced members of his six-month-old government.

Speculation about a reshuffle among the Wahid's four-member economic team has been in the Indonesian media since Wahid blasted the team for its failure to implement a set of reforms mandated by the IMF.

Other critics have accused the team of internal divisions and incompetence.

Earlier today, visiting IMF acting managing director Stanley Fischer emerged from talks with Wahid and warned the government not to waver from

deep financial reforms demanded by international lenders.

"I believe the president will renew his efforts to implement the programme" Fischer said.

Until now the IMF has bailed Indonesia out of its worst economic crisis in three decades but only after repeatedly cajoling it into making deep and wide-ranging changes to its corrupt and inefficient financial system.

Scores of Indonesian corporations and banks are technically bankrupt. The Indonesian currency, the rupiah, last week slumped to its lowest level since Wahid, who is regarded as a reformer, came to power ending years of authoritarian rule.



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

স্থানীয় সরকার, পল্লী উন্নয়ন ও সমবায় মন্ত্রণালয়
স্থানীয় সরকার বিভাগ

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তির সংশোধনী

ঢাকা আবদান ট্রান্সপোর্ট প্রকল্পের ঢাকা সিটি কর্পোরেশন অংশের প্রকল্প বাস্তবায়ন ইউনিটে কতিপয় পদে লোক নিয়োগের জন্য ৯/০৪/২০০০ইং তারিখে দৈনিক সংবাদ এবং অবজারভার পত্রিকায় নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশিত হয়েছিল। উহার মধ্যে ৫নং ক্রমিকের ডিপ্লোম্যাট "রিসেস্টমেন্ট অফিসার" পদের শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা নিম্নবর্ণিতভাবে সংশোধন করা হলো।

সংশোধনী

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অন্যান্য সকল শর্তাবলী অপরিবর্তিত থাকিবে।

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