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PM will lay foundation of Rooppur N-Plant in November

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to lay the foundation of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant (RNPP) at Iswardi in November this year, reports UNB.

A decision to this effect came from a cabinet committee meeting on the RNPP chaired by the Prime Minister at her office yesterday noon.

The plant is expected to generate 600-mw electricity to meet the growing demand of power at home.

The meeting endorsed in principle formation of a Nuclear Power Council headed by the PM. Under the council, a new authority will be instituted to expedite implementation of the nuclear power project.

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Rape case: 2 get life term in Bagerhat

BAGERHAT, July 23: A court here today sentenced two people, in absentia, to life term imprisonment in a rape case, reports UNB.

The convicts are Mostafa Morol and Alamgir Hossain of Hogaldanga village in Fakirhat upazila.

According to prosecution, Mostafa and Alamgir entered the house of one Renu Khatun, 20, of the same village and raped her on January 8, 1997.

Later, the victim filed a case with the police.

The Judge of Women and Children Repression Prevention Court M Aftabuddin handed down the punishment acquitting two other accused.



Sangbad Editor Bazlur Rahman addressing a citizens' meeting at Jessore yesterday condemning the killing of journalist Shamsur Rahman. — Star photo

SA team arrives soon to discuss NAM Summit preparations

By Diplomatic Correspondent

A high-powered South African delegation will be here in early next month to discuss and review the preparations for the 13th NAM Summit scheduled to be held in Dhaka in next September.

The team will come with their portfolio of experiences gathered when South Africa hosted the last NAM Summit, said Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad while addressing a press conference at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday.

South Africa is the current chairman of the NAM troika which includes Columbia as the past chairman and Bangladesh as the incoming chairman.

Azad said he had discussions on several matters including the NAM during the meeting with the foreign ministers of the NAM troika and the G-8 countries in the Japanese city of Miyazaki, the venue of the meeting of G-8 Foreign Ministers.

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BB allows renaming of Grindlays

By Inam Ahmed

The Bangladesh Bank has allowed ANZ Grindlays to be named Standard Chartered Grindlays Bank following its acquisition by Standard Chartered Bank (SCB).

In a recently given permission, the BB said that SCB would acquire all the shares and liabilities of Grindlays.

SCB will then apply to Bangladesh Bank for final approval pledging unequivocally that the new Standard Chartered Grindlays will take over all the liabilities of ANZ Grindlays.

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Minister tells TUs Biman employees will rather gain from privatisation

By Special Correspondent

Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mosharraf Hossain yesterday assured Bangladesh Biman employees that they have nothing to lose but to gain after conversion of the airline into a Public Limited Company (PLC) as part of a privatisation programme.

"There will be no job cut. None will be declared surplus if we convert Biman into a PLC. Your interests will be protected. You have more to benefit from a tie-up with a strategic partner," he told a meeting with trade unions leaders of Biman.

Leaders of five trades unions and employees' associations attended the meeting, held at Biman head office. The meeting continued for about three hours from 3:30 pm.

The trade unions earlier formed a Steering Committee led by CBA President Mohiuddin Ahmed to launch programmes protesting privatisation of the state owned airline.

A Biman official who assisted the minister in the meeting later told newsmen that there was detailed discussion on privatisation and conversion of the airline into a PLC to off-load 49 per cent shares.

As per the plan prepared by consultants from Citibank Group, New York, 40 per cent share will be offered to a 'strategic

partner' and nine percent to Biman staff. The Biman is being privatised under a two million dollar World Bank aided programme.

The consultants submitted its report to the authorities last month, which sparked off protests by the employees. Biman, with 13 aircraft and 5550 employees, incurred a loss of Tk 59 crore last year.

Mosharraf Hossain told the union leaders that laws would be enacted to convert the airline into a PLC to attract a 'strategic partner', according to the Biman official. "None will be interested if Biman is not commercialised. We want commercialisation so that Biman turns profitable with a strategic partner," the minister told the meeting.

The minister urged the union leaders to consult legal advisers. Turning Biman into a PLC is the best option to make it profitable, he said and assured them that jobs, facilities, pension and gratuity of all employees would remain intact.

These will be guaranteed in the agreement with a strategic partner, the minister was quoted as telling the union leaders. There will be amendment to the Company Act, he added.

After the meeting, Mohiuddin Ahmed, convenor of the Steering Committee, told newsmen that the talks were not fruitful. "But we will talk again if the authorities want".

Another CBA leader said they will go for 'tough action programme' to resist the move.

Before the meeting with the minister, the trade union leaders addressing a rally at Biman head office vowed to continue their movement. Mohiuddin announced at the rally that there would be 'gate meetings' at the Engineering Hangar on Tuesday and at Balaka (Biman head office) on Thursday.

After the rally, the employees brought out a procession which terminated at Biman's Engineering Department at the Zia International Airport.

BNP blasts Osman's remark

By Staff Correspondent

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has expressed deep anguish and surprise at the news that Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia was declared 'unwanted' at Narayanganj by ruling party MP Shamim Osman.

In a statement yesterday, he said the ruling Awami League has given the licence to some 'godfathers and fascists' to make any remark against anyone. The arrogant remark by Shamim Osman is a reflection of that.

Bhuiyan said thousands of leaders and activists of BNP sacrificed their lives for independence of Bangladesh and Khaleda Zia is the Chairperson of that party. Moreover Khaleda Zia is the most popular political personality in Bangladesh, he added.

"Declaring Khaleda Zia persona non grata in a district town is possible only for a perverted and mentally sick person," the BNP secretary general said adding "People of Bangladesh will give a befitting reply to the arrogant remark."

Jail Killing Case: Hearing on charge framing Aug 6

By Court Correspondent

The Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, yesterday fixed August 6 for hearing on charge framing in the Jail Killing Case.

Judge Ahmed Jamil Mostafa adjourned the proceedings after hearing the statement of the case for Taheruddin Thakur.

Four national leaders — Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, A H M Qamruzzaman and Captain Monsur Ali — were brutally killed in the Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975.

Then DIG prison Abdul Awal filed the Jail Killing Case on November 4, 1975 under Section 302/34 of the Penal Code.

The CID took up the case on September 10, 1996 and submitted a charge-sheet accusing 23 people after two years of investigation.

Of the chargesheeted accused, eight are now at the Dhaka Central Jail, two are dead and the rest 13 — all former military personnel have been absconding.

Bomb blast kills 9 in Quetta garrison area

QUETTA (Pakistan) July 23:

At least nine people, mostly soldiers were killed when a powerful bomb rocked a garrison area in the southwestern Pakistan city of Quetta late Saturday, police and witnesses said, reports AFP.

The bomb, planted on a bicycle in the Jinnah Market, a popular fastfood area, went off when many stalls and restaurants were packed with people, police said.

Six diners sitting outside a shop died on the spot while three succumbed to their injuries in a hospital, they said.

Officials said almost all the victims were off-duty soldiers.

At least 27 people were injured, 16 of them with 'serious injuries' were still in a military hospital, officials said.

The ear-splitting blast damaged several shops and triggered panic in the market, witnesses said.

Immediately after the market blasts two more bombs exploded outside the city's police stations, causing damage to the premises but no casualties, police said.

20 hurt during hartal in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, July 23: At least 20 people were injured in a clash between police and pickets at Nur Ahmed road near BNP office during hartal hours today, witnesses said.

The injured were taken to different private clinics for treatment.

Police arrested 16 pickets during the trouble that took place at about 6 pm today.

APAC sources said police without any provocation attacked a procession of opposition supporters at Nur Ahmed road while it was heading towards BNP office from Laidighi area.

Police sources said the clash began after some processionists exploded cocktails at Nur Ahmed road.

Police then swung into action by firing teargas shells and resorting to lathicharge to disperse the agitating opposition activists.

The processionists also pelted stones at the police and at one stage fled the scene.

A large number of police were deployed around the BNP office after the incident.

Suspected killer of Jessore journalist remanded

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, July 23: The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) has placed Rafique, one of the suspects in journalist Shamsur Rahman Murder Case, on six-day remand with effect from today.

Rafique, a professional killer, was arrested on Wednesday by Khulna thana police.

He was one of the members of the 'killing squad' which went to Jessore last year to kill Shamsur Rahman.

All efforts to influence both KMP and judiciary for cancelling remand prayer proved futile when CMM granted it for six days after hearing today.

CID will start interrogating Rafique tomorrow.

CID did not rule out the possibility of sending Rafique to Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) for quizzing him about the murder that has already evoked widespread condemnation.

Some of the journalists of Khulna and Jessore are receiving death threats over phone for writing against murder of Journalists Shamsur Rahman.

DSE price index crosses 600 pts

Star Report

After a week long depression prices at Dhaka Stock Exchange rallied yesterday, pushing the price index over 600-point a mark.

Sources attributed the surge to institutional buying, mainly by the Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB).

The price index had been witnessing massive fluctuation recently, hitting a recent high of 745.48 from 561.83 points within a span of just seven days.

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