



Proposed Kaptai plants by Marubeni

Ministry once again asks PDB to cut cost, finalise deal

By Sharier Khan

The Energy Ministry has once again instructed the Power Development Board (PDB) to cut the cost of the proposed Kaptai 6 and 7 power plants and finalise an 'unsolicited' negotiation with Japanese company Marubeni.

The plants will together generate 110 MW of power. The budget for the plants was originally estimated at Tk 719 crore. PDB later revised it to Tk 580 crore.

Power sector experts however say a 110 MW power plant should not cost more than Tk 200 crore. Modification of the Kaptai dam for the project should cost less than Tk 200 crore.

Kaptai dam has to be raised by at least 14 feet to make the two 55 MW hydro power units financially viable, sources said.

The project will be financed by the Japan Bank of Investment Corporation (JBIC) and the government.

Sources said that the present water level is not enough for expansion of the dam. "Some-

times the water level is so low that the existing power units can not be run optimally," said a source.

PDB proposed to the Energy Ministry late last month to begin negotiations with Marubeni on the basis of 'One Package Direct Contract' and appoint Tapesco as the project consultant. Marubeni built the Kaptai 4 and 5 units, built in the eighties. Tapesco was the consultant.

As per the project schedule, the government was supposed to appoint Tapesco by September 30. But as many questions are now being raised, the process has been delayed.

Meanwhile, Marubeni in a letter informed PDB on October 19 that it had formed a consortium for the project. The consortium has been formed with Marubeni and Taisei Corporation with the support of Hitachi Limited, Toshiba Corporation, Hitachi Zosen and Takaoka.

It urged PDB to speed up the work. It said, "In accordance with the basic concept of the project, that is to implement the project and generate power as quickly as possible, there has to be some parallel work to save time. Otherwise, if lengthy procedures are followed then it may contradict the basic understanding and spirit of the project."

The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) did not approve the project as it was 'too costly'.

After preliminary discussion with the Environment Ministry PDB had claimed that elevation of the Kaptai dam would not be hazardous for the local community.

But sources say no study has been done to support PDB's claim.

PDB aims at completing the project by September 2005 as per an agreement with the JBIC.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing a meeting marking the Jail Killing Day yesterday in the city's Osmany Udyan. Four national leaders were assassinated at the Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975. - Star photo

DU suspends six students

By DU Correspondent

The Dhaka University authorities yesterday suspended six students and declared them "undesirable persons" on the campus in connection with the attack on another student on the campus.

Khairul Bashar Tarofder, a MSS student of International Relations department, was injured when attacked allegedly by some activists of a faction of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) near the Teachers and Students Centre (TSC) on Thursday.

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IU incident: 144 students arrested

From IU Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Nov 3: Police have arrested 144 students of the Islamic University in connection with yesterday's incident on the campus.

Police raided different dormitories of the university and messes in Kushtia town last night and arrested them.

Of them, 66 were arrested under Public Safety Act (PSA) and the rest under Section 54.

The university authorities formed a committee to probe the incident.

Sunday's hartal in Ctg called off

CHITTAGONG, Nov 3: The dawn-to-dusk hartal scheduled for Sunday in the port city has been called off, reports UNB.

The hartal was called by Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad protesting the arrest of Nazim Uddin, a leader of BNP-backed Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal.

Sramik Dal president Abdullah Al Noman confirmed the decision to postpone the hartal today, sources said.

Inside Today

Article

ME peace process in Cauldron

Conciliation Not Confrontation is the Way Out

By Mohammad Amjad Hossain

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Supplements

A two page supplement on the 'National Day of Italy' on pages 13 and 14 and one and a half page supplement on 'Mega Expo 2000' on pages 15 and 16

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Nov 4		5.18 pm
Nov 5	6-07 am	

Prayer Timings

November 4		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-00	5-35
Zohr	12-45	1-20
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-25	5-30
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

PARC recommendations: Only 2 out of 160 implemented

By Shehab Ahmed

The government had extended the tenure of the Public Administration Reforms Commission (PARC) in May this year to enable it to complete its task but implemented so far only two of its 160 recommendations.

The PARC got a six-month extension of tenure till November 30 to finish its remaining task of preparing a reform code for public sector corporations, autonomous and semi-autonomous bodies.

Sources concerned said PARC found it too difficult to complete the huge task of preparing the code for 173 such bodies and decided to work out reforms in 21

of those by November 30. It now faces uncertainty unless the government extends its tenure again and implements its recommendations.

"But retaining the Commission as a permanent body remains a far cry although the development partners and agencies are pressing for it. These include the World Bank and the UNDP. Funds from the donors are yet to be exhausted and the Commission could continue its work for some time more," a PARC source said.

Implementation of the PARC recommendations, prepared after discussions with different bodies, groups and even opposition poli-

ticians, remains uncertain as the five-year tenure of this government is nearing an end.

Administrative reforms were a major election pledge of the ruling Awami League.

Formed in October 1996, PARC prepared a three-volume report containing 160 recommendations and presented it to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina recently for her perusal and action.

The government has implemented two of the recommendations -- payment of travel tax along with air ticket and opening a cubicle at the Secretariat to receive letters from members of

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Jyoti's last day in office



Jyoti Basu (R) arrives at office for his last day at work, followed by his replacement Buddhadev Bhattacharya at Calcutta's Writers Building. -AFP photo

CALCUTTA, Nov 3: West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu finished his last day at work today after 23 years at the head of the world's longest-running elected Communist government, reports AFP.

Jyoti's 'autocratic' style of government had earned him many critics in the eastern Indian state, but he was given a touching farewell by politicians, journalists and staff as he left the government secretariat in Calcutta for the last time.

An emotional Jyoti Basu, who steps down Monday as head of the state's ruling Left Front coalition, told reporters that he would not be going into secluded retirement.

"I will be in politics as long as I live and serve my party," he said, adding that he would work for the formation of a "third front" to challenge India's two dominant parties the ruling Hindu nationalist BJP and the main opposition Congress party.

"I am ready to go ahead with my plans and I am in touch with like-minded national leaders to give a shape to the third front," he said.

The 87-year-old London-educated barrister became chief minister of West Bengal in 1977 and has been trying to retire for the past two years, citing health reasons.

But the Left Front alliance in West Bengal, dominated by his Communist Party of India (Marxist) had been reluctant to let the experienced octogenarian go.

West Bengal will hold state elections early next year, and there are predictions Jyoti Basu's absence could herald the end of the ruling coalition.

Bomb hoax

Five non-active bombs were found on Thursday afternoon near the Prime Minister's meeting venue at the Osmany Udyan, reports UNB.

Police sources said the five bombs, three made of 'Jorda' casket and two of phensidyl bottles were tucked in a dustbin there. Sweepers saw those while clearing the bin.

"Getting frightened sighting the bombs the sweepers informed us," one police officer said. The news also reached army bomb experts who rushed to the spot.

Later recovering the bombs, police took those to Ramna thana. Officer-in-Charge of Ramna thana ABM Sultan told UNB that all the bombs were now in police custody. "But all are expired," he said.

Opposition trying to protect '75 killers: Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday charged the top leaders of the Opposition alliance with harbouring the killers of 1975 and urged the people to "uproot them from the country".

Naming BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Jatiya Party chief HM Ershad and Jamaat-e-Islami leader Ghulam Azam, she said, "They got united to save the killers of Bangabandhu and those who killed the four national leaders inside the jail."

Hasina, also president of ruling Awami League, was presiding over a commemorative meeting organised by her party in the city's Osmany Udyan marking the Jail Killing Day.

Four national leaders Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, AHM Quamruzzaman, and Captain Mansur Ali who led the War of Liberation were killed inside Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975, less than three months after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in a

military putsch on August 15.

The AL chief asked her partymen as well as people in general to build up resistance against the Opposition "which is harbouring the killers of 1975".

"Build up forts of resistance in all areas against the parties protecting the killers. Uproot them from this soil," Hasina told the rally.

AL leaders and workers from different parts of the city and Dhaka's adjoining districts thronged the Osmani Udyan from early afternoon yesterday.

Scores of buses and trucks which carried people to the meeting venue were parked on busy city streets, causing serious traffic jams on the weekly holiday.

About the Opposition's current movement, Hasina said Khaleda Zia has become frustrated as Ershad would be put behind the bars and Ghulam Azam has relinquished party post.

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Govt to lose Tk 82 crore health sector 'reimbursement money'

By Naimul Haq

The government will lose more than Tk 82 crore as reimbursement money for the health sector in the first six months of the current fiscal year as it did not meet three out of four World Bank preconditions, health ministry sources said.

The preconditions are to plan

guidelines, prepare and notify patients' charter of rights, issue notification for unification of two wings of the health ministry at district and directorate levels and ensure functioning of 'management account unit' at the ministry level. The first one was met.

The WB had agreed to reim-

burse about 10 per cent of the total revenue and development expenditures of the health ministry every year since the launching of the five-year Health and Population Sector Programme (HPSF) in fiscal 1998-1999, the sources said.

On the basis of the agreement, See page 11 col 7

Voters have a right to know ...

NEW DELHI, Nov 3: Voters have a right to know if political candidates are criminals, the Delhi High Court has ruled, reports AP.

Since the candidates are unlikely to provide this information, the national Election Commission must do so, the court ruled on Thursday.

The court said that the Election Commission must provide information through the news media about whether candidates for parliament or for state assemblies are accused of any crime punishable by imprisonment.

The court said the commission must also inform voters of the candidate's education qualifications, and the property and other assets of the candidate, spouse or relatives.

In some of India's states, candidates with criminal records, or those accused of heading criminal gangs, have run for office and won. They often seek political power to block prosecution and use their henchmen to intimidate voters and opponents.

In last December's state elections in eastern Bihar state, at least 36 of the 3,000 candidates for the legislature had criminal records or were facing serious charges in court, police said. Among those candidates was Laloo Yadav, who was elected in 1989 to Bihar's highest office, chief minister, but was forced to resign in 1997 in connection with a scandal over government payment of bogus bills for animal fodder. While he was in prison, his party named his wife, who could barely read and write, to run the state government.

US-North Korea missile talks end without agreement

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 3: The United States and North Korea ended three days of sensitive talks today without arriving at a formula to curb the communist country's dangerous missile programme, the chief obstacle to a possible trip there by President Clinton, reports AP.

Although progress had been made during the discussions, "significant issues remain to be explored and resolved," said Robert Einhorn, the chief US negotiator.

No date was fixed for a new round of discussions and the next step in the process would be decided by Washington, Einhorn, the assistant secretary of state for nonproliferation, said in a state-

ment. The discussions this week in Kuala Lumpur sought to further clarify areas explored" by US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright during her visit to Pyongyang last week, the statement said.

Einhorn did not appear to answer reporters' questions and a scheduled news conference was canceled by the US Embassy.

The North Korean delegates, who had promised to brief waiting reporters, also declined to talk, except for a brief remark.

"During these talks, the atmosphere was very constructive and serious. I can't really talk about what we really spoke about," said Jung Sung Il, secre-

tary general of the North Korean Foreign Ministry.

The stakes had been extraordinarily high in the talks, both for defusing the world's last major Cold War-era tripwire and improving long-term hopes for peace in Northeast Asia, and, for Clinton, a chance of salvaging a legacy as a statement as his term draws to a close.

When the talks began Wednesday, Einhorn had indicated that the discussions between Albright and North Korean leader Kim Jong Il had created a positive atmosphere for a possible deal on curbing Pyongyang's missile programme.

Since then, both sides have refused to talk to reporters about

the details of the dialogue.

The reticence underlines the sensitivity of the meetings, which are seen as the key that could encourage Clinton to make a historic visit to the communist country, which Washington has long counted among its most dangerous enemies.

A deadlock could set back the process of detente, which has warmed since a summit between the leaders of North and South Korea in June. A new US administration, led by either Al Gore or George W Bush, would be left to redefine relations in Northeast Asia.

Negotiators had worked on proposals that North Korea curb See page 11 col 7

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