

Pvt sector should have a role in S Asian power cooperation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Local and foreign experts yesterday said private sector involvement in South Asian power cooperation should be promoted.

They were speaking at the first day of the two-day long semiannual meeting of USAID-sponsored South Asia Regional Initiative for Energy (SARI/Energy).

It was attended by, among others, Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, US Ambassador in Dhaka Mary Ann Peters and State Minister for Energy Mosharraf Hussain.

Energy sector officials and experts from the US, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal

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Headway claimed in missing US reporter case

REUTERS, Karachi

Pakistani police say they have made progress in their hunt for missing and presumed kidnapped U.S. reporter Daniel Pearl and hope to find some important clues soon.

When he disappeared in the port city of Karachi last week, Pearl was trying to contact Islamic militant groups linked to Saudi-born fugitive Osama bin Laden, accused by Washington of masterminding the September 11 attacks on the United States.

"We have made some initial success...The investigation is still going on, we've made some head

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Regional power exchange

Local experts dispute views of US firm

RAZIUR RAHMAN

A US consultancy, Nexant, is upbeat about the prospect of power exchange among Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Bhutan, saying this is a profitable venture. But local experts are downbeat about the proposal though, as they say this may not be feasible because of different power tariffs among the countries.

A pre-feasibility study for power exchange among Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Bhutan conducted by Nexant suggests these countries can exchange 500 MW power among them with an investment of US\$ 31.6 million.

The study report was presented by DN Raina, leader of the team that conducted the study, on the first day of the semiannual meeting of USAID-sponsored South Asia Regional Initiative for Energy (SARI/Energy) at a

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city hotel.

A number of local energy experts however identified price of power imported through a proposed regional transmission interconnection and political consensus among the countries concerned as the factors that have to be addressed first.

The study is based on the projection that both Nepal and Bhutan will have significant surplus hydropower for export to India and Bangladesh through the proposed regional transmission interconnection.

Nepal's hydropower potential is approximately 83,000 MW while that of Bhutan is around 30,000 MW, it was disclosed at yesterday's meeting.

Raina while talking to The Daily Star said the study considered a sub-station at Shiliguri of India to be the central point of the proposed regional transmission inter

Massive manhunt for Tapan

2 cops get bail, case goes to DB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police forces in the south-western zone were put on 'high alert' while the two constables arrested for alleged complicity in the escape of notorious outlaw Tapan were granted bail by the CMM's court on Monday, rejecting a prayer for remand.

The OC of Khulna Sadar thana sought five days' remand for the two constables, Ayub Ali and AL Amin, arrested for negligence of duty in guarding Tapan.

Abdur Rashid Tapan, a top

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2 armed cadres of PBCP held in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna thana police yesterday arrested two armed cadres of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP).

The arrested outlaws are Anisuzzaman, 30, and Chandana Chakrabarty, 28.

Anisuzzaman was arrested from the residence of one Daud Ali at Haji Mohsin Road. Police recovered a USA-made SBL gun and six live cartridges from his possession. He is an armed cadre of Rashid group of PBCP police said.

Chandana Chakrabarty was arrested from the premises of

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'Save Osmany Udyan, public parks in city'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a public rally yesterday urged the authorities to save the Osmany Udyan as well as other public parks and playgrounds in the city from "influential and unscrupulous" developers.

They also pledged to save the greenery of the city to protect future generations from environmental disaster.

Expressing grave concern at the recent move to grab the Osmany Udyan, the speakers observed that such an action would destroy the city greenery and reduce breathing space for the city dwellers.

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BPA) organised the rally in front of the Nagar Bhaban in the afternoon. Presided over by Prof. Abdullah Abu Sayeed, the rally was also addressed, among others, by Abul Mal Abdul Muhit, Prof. Sirajul Islam

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PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon brought out a procession in the city yesterday demanding protection of public parks and playgrounds from encroachers. They also submitted a memorandum to the DCC mayor in this regard.

Kolkata incident India dismisses reports on arrest or detention of Bangladeshis

UNB, Dhaka

India dismissed media reports on alleged detention or arrest of some Bangladeshi nationals in connection with the attack on American centre in Kolkata.

The remark came when Bangladesh Acting High Commissioner to New Delhi Ismat Jahan met Additional Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs of India P Rath in the Indian capital on Monday, said a fax message received here yesterday.

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Ecuadorean jetliner with 92 aboard crashes in Colombia

AP, Quito (Ecuador)

An Ecuadorean jetliner carrying 92 people, including seven children, crashed in Colombia in the fog-shrouded Andes, the airline said.

The Boeing 727-100 from Ecuador's TAME airline originated in the capital, Quito, and was headed to the Ecuadorean border city of Tulcan, 175 kilometres to the northeast. Its flight plan took it over the Colombian city of Ipiales, the airline said.

It crashed near Ipiales, just over the border from Tulcan, said TAME spokeswoman, Toa Quirola. She did not give more details. The mayor's office of Ipiales said the city was foggy at the time the plane went down.

TAME's airport chief Jorge Godrillo said after nightfall that three planes and one helicopter had combed the area near Ipiales but could not find the crash site. Search efforts had been suspended until Tuesday

morning, he said.

Diego Vallejo, a spokesman for the Ecuadorean Red Cross, had said earlier Monday that rescue workers knew where the plane crashed but that they hadn't been able to reach the site. "The plane is located in Colombian territory," he said, without specifying where.

Martin Gonzalez, spokesman for Colombia's Civil Aviation, said authorities were trying to confirm reports that farmers near the Colombian town of Cumbal, 20 kilometres northwest of Ipiales, heard a big explosion Monday that could have been a crash.

The town is near the plane's approach path to Tulcan, said Juan Carlos Velez, director of Colombia's Civil Aviation authority. Cumbal lies near two volcanoes, 4,764-metre Nevado de Cumbal and 4,748-metre Chile's volcano.

"Because of this, we calculate that the plane, if it has

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Autorickshaw strike in city today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League backed Bangladesh Autorickshaw Sramik Union has called a day long strike in the city today protesting the government decision to remove auto-rickshaws and tempos from the city.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the union at its central office yesterday.

Presided over by Sukkur Ali, the meeting was attended by Mohammad Insar Ali, General Secretary of the union, Shah Alam Chowdhury, Adviser and Azhar Ali, Joint Secretary.

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BNP activist shot dead

BSS, Dhaka

A BNP activist was kidnapped and shot dead by a gang of terrorists at Mohammadpur in the city yesterday.

Police and family sources said Alamgir Hossain, 30, a leader of BNP, Ward Number 46, was kidnapped by a gang of terrorists from his house in the embankment area at about 11-30 AM. They took him to a place at Nababad Housing Society in a microbus and killed him. His body was later found in a ditch near the housing society.

Police recovered the body and sent it to DMCH for autopsy.

A case was registered with Mohammadpur Thana in this connection.

AL demands foolproof security for Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League yesterday demanded foolproof security for former prime minister and AL president Sheikh Hasina failing which, they warned, the alliance government would solely be responsible for any attempt on her life.

"We are concerned at government's deliberate attempt of withdrawing security and leaving Sheikh Hasina insecure ... There must be some deep conspiracies behind it," AL presidium member Abdus Samad Azad told newsmen at the party's Dhanmondi office.

Even after payment as per rule,

he said, the authorities refused to deploy Ansars for security arrangement at the residence of the leader of the opposition in parliament.

Earlier, Azad said, the alliance government had withdrawn special security for Sheikh Hasina, removed metal detectors from Sudha Sadan on December 24 at a time "when BNP-Jamaat terrorists were issuing open threat to stage another 15th August."

He pointed out that instead of taking necessary steps for completing the trial of Bangabandhu Murder Case, the government is releasing convicts from prison cell and plan

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5 killed in Trishal bus accident

UNB, Mymensingh

At least five people, including a university student, were killed and 30 others injured in a bus accident at Chelerghat in Trisal upazila yesterday.

Police said the accident occurred when a Dhaka-bound bus from Mymensingh skidded off the highway and fell into a ditch at about 9 am. Four passengers died on the spot.

The dead included Khorshed Alam, 28, a student of Bangladesh Agriculture University in Mymensingh. He hailed from Cox's Bazar district.

The three others were identified as Hafizuddin, 40, an employee of Sonali Bank's Motijheel Dilkusha

Wage Earner Branch, and Shamim Hossain, 35, and Shahnaj Begum, 28, employees of Mymensingh Settlement Office. The first hailed from Mymensingh town and the rest two from Kushtia district.

Bus driver Masud, 28, of Sreepur Upazila in Magura district succumbed to his injuries on way to hospital.

All the bodies were sent to Trishal Upazila Health Complex for autopsy.

Nine of the injured Selim, Firoz, Shamima, Saifullah, Anwar, Babul, Marzina, Kanchan and Pradwip were rushed to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

A case was filed with the local police.

Al-Qaida men regroup in Afghanistan

AFP, Tumoni

UP to 1,200 members of the Al-Qaida network of Osama bin Laden have regrouped in mountains near the village of Zurmat in eastern Afghanistan, an Afghan military commander said yesterday.

Padsha Khan, incoming governor of Paktia province and a powerful Mujahedin commander, told AFP he was readying some 6,000 fighters to launch an attack on Zurmat but he first needed to gather more

intelligence on the situation.

"We are not sure of how many there are or of their exact location," Khan said at his headquarters in this adobe village about 30 kilometres west of the main Paktia city of Gardez.

Some local sources had reported around 800 fighters in the mountains, and other 1,200, he said.

Once he had better intelligence, he would pass it on to US military commanders in charge of pursuing

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