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Govt trying to ensure uninterrupted power supply: State minister

BSS, Dhaka

State Minister for Power Iqbal Hasan Mahmood yesterday said the government is working hard to ensure uninterrupted power supply to Dhaka city by taking different measures.

Steps are also underway to improve the countrywide generation, transmission and distribution of power with foreign funding, he said while exchanging views with members of the Forum for Energy Reporters at DESA Bhawan in the city.

Mahmood said the government has initiated different measures for reducing the system loss, renovating and installing transmission lines and repairing the age-old power plants.

As a result, transmission and distribution of electricity in Dhaka city have risen from 900 megawatt (MW) to 1050 MW.

The state minister said the government has decided to complete any tender process in the power sector within 90 on 120 days in a transparent way to ensure timely procurement of materials.

He said both the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank have agreed to provide 190 million dollars each for development in

the power sector.

There will be a block amount in the World Bank loan for producing renewable energy in the areas not covered by the national grid, the state minister said.

In reply to a question, the state minister said the government is planning to renegotiate the independent power plants (IPP) set up in a hurry during the tenure of the previous government.

He said the Power Development Board has incurred an estimated loss of Tk 300 crore so far for buying electricity from the IPPs in dollar and selling the same in taka. The loss will be accumulated further in the future due to constant fluctuation of the taka-dollar exchange rate, he pointed out.

Iqbal Hasan Mahmood said that considering the national interest, there should be a provision that any IPP, if found making profit five years after its establishment, must float fifty per cent share to the capital market.

Responding to a query, he said national interest should not be ignored for foreign investment in any sector.

To carry forward reform programmes in the power sector, the state minister said a National Advisory Committee with the peoples

participation was constituted.

The first meeting of the committee will be held after the Prime Minister returns home.

If accepted by the committee, the government will make the PDB a holding company to make the organisation competitive and profitable, he said.

Pre-paid metering system will also be introduced and the users will be given discount, the state minister said.

In reply to a question, power secretary Shamsul Islam said the DESA owes PDB an outstanding bill amounting to Tk 800 crore.

President greets King Abdullah

UNB, Dhaka

President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury has greeted King Abdullah-II Ben Al Hussein of Jordan on the occasion of its National Day.

In a message yesterday, the President said, "I sincerely believe that the relations between the two countries characterised by close bonds will be further consolidated and diversified in the years to come."

In another message, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has felicitated her counterpart, Ali Abul Ragheb, on the occasion of the National Day of Jordan.

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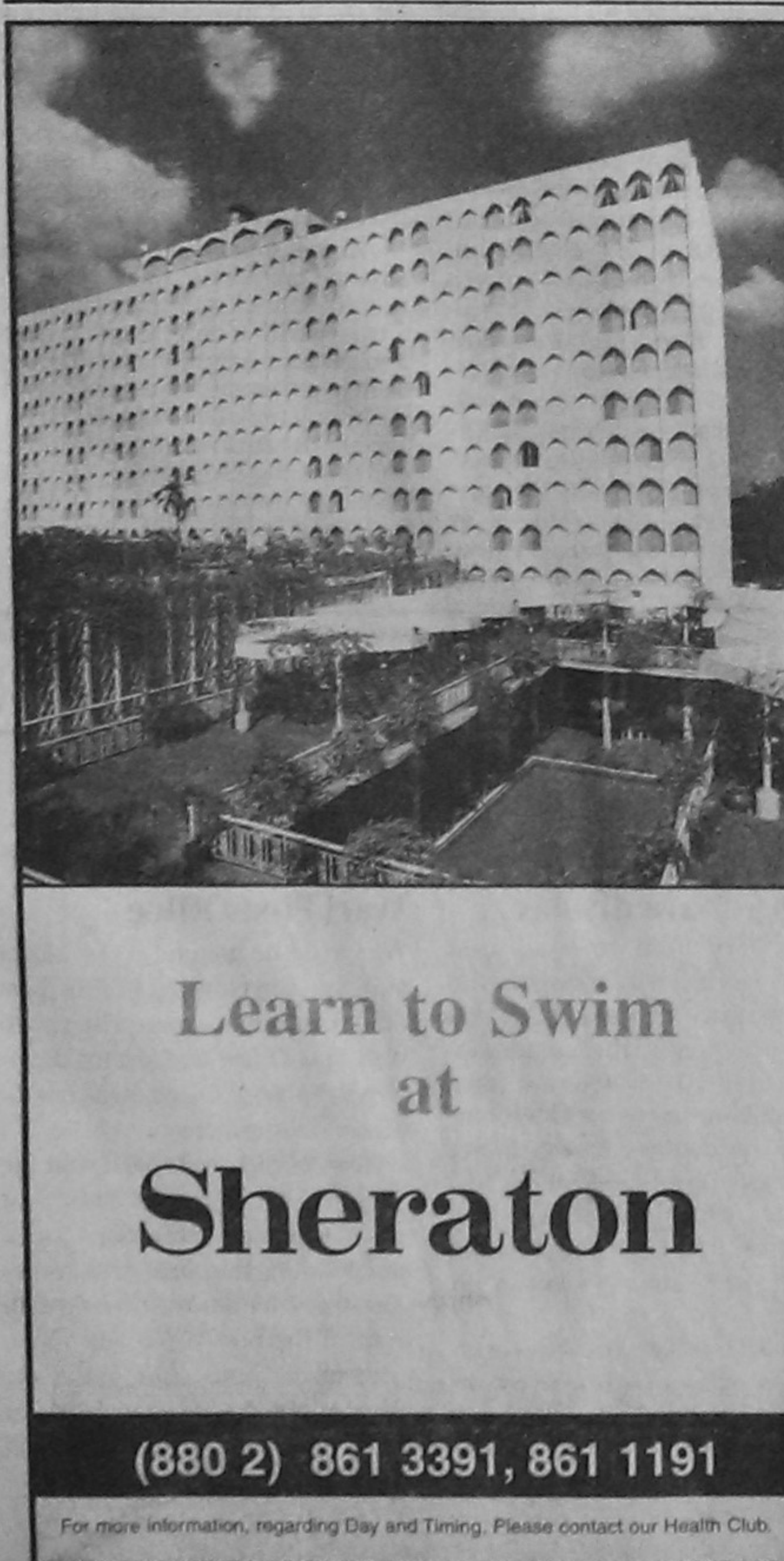
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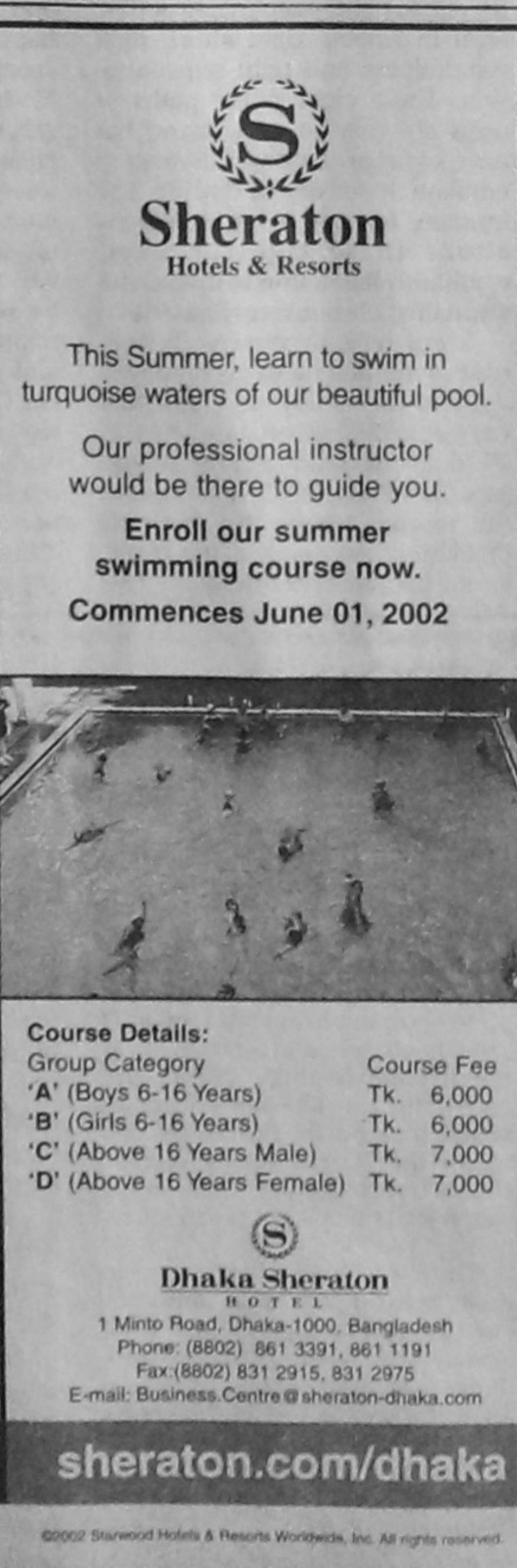
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