

GHORASAL POWER PLANT REHABILITATION

# PDB revives deal with Russian low performer

STAR REPORT

The Power Development Board (PDB) yesterday decided to revive a four-year-old deal with a poorly-performing Russian company to rehabilitate Ghorashal 1 and 2 power plants.

It will make a downpayment in favour of the Russian company, Technopromexport or TPE, which had signed a contract to set up within three years a power plant in Siddhirganj back in 1995, but could not finish the work in nine years, according to sources.

This will also mean that as much as 1400 metric tons of non-guaranteed power plant equipment

that the TPE unilaterally imported in early 2001 will be used for rehabilitation of the power plant. The equipment remains dumped at a jetty near the Siddhirganj power plant site, which sources said, has rusted badly.

Officials at the PDB would not comment why the authorities revived the deal which became a subject of anti-corruption investigation immediately after the BNP-led coalition took office.

The PDB signed the \$17.7 million contract with the TPE bypassing the Economic Relations Division (ERD) for the rehabilitation of the 33-year-old Ghorashal power units 1 and 2 under suppliers' credit

scheme on May 31, 2000.

The sealing of the deal annoyed the ERD and it objected to the contract, opening the way for an inter-ministerial investigation into the deal. The contract was also put on hold for sometime.

The suspension was later withdrawn, but the contract could not take effect, as the TPE in an agreement declined payment of 10 percent of the total project cost within 45 days of the contract signing.

The finance ministry was also to issue a Letter of Guarantee to the contractor so that the contractor submits its bank guarantee to the

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## Grenade thrown at police camp in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unknown criminals threw a hand grenade at Icegati police camp in Khulna on Sunday.

As it did not blast, none of the 10 policemen at the camp was hurt, sources said.

One of the three youths on a speeding motorcycle hurled the grenade at about 7:30pm, witnesses said.

Police made the grenade inactive, said Habibur Rahman, superintendent of police, Khulna.

He suspects alleged activists of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (M-L) launched the attack as the underground outfit recently threatened to avenge the 'killing' of its south-western region chief Abdur Rashid Shaikh Tapu in a crossfire with the joint forces.

Khulna district police were put on alert following the attack, sources added.

Rupsha police failed to nab anyone till 6:30 yesterday evening.



Randomly parked cars close to Purbani Hotel in Motijheel create traffic chaos on the road in the busy commercial capital.

PHOTO: STAR

## Sramik League calls 24-hour hartal for June 5

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League's (AL) labour front Jatiya Sramik League yesterday called a countrywide 24-hour hartal for June 5 protesting 'the government's failure' to nab the killers of its leader Ahsanullah Master.

Abdul Matin Master, president of Sramik League, announced the programme at a press conference at the party central office. He also placed a set of demands including withdrawal of cases filed against the

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## 4 PBCP men nabbed at Shahbagh in 2 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police has arrested four operatives of banned Purbo Banglar Communist Party in two days at Aziz Cooperative Super Market in Shahbagh.

Ramna police nabbed Mahfuzur Rahman Jewel of Bagmara Rahshahi yesterday, a day after three others— Abdur Razzak, Ali Tareq and Shafi Sarkar were caught in a raid.

A Dhaka court remanded Mahfuzur in custody for 5 days.

Investigation Officer Sub-inspector Abdus Sattar of Ramna

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## Two killed in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday retrieved the bodies of two people from Tejgaon and Agargaon in the capital.

Tejgaon police found the slaughtered body of an unidentified young man, aged around 30, at Maddhya Kunipara in Tejgaon at about 11:30am. The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsy, sources said.

The man in printed shirt and lungi had his head almost severed from the neck, police said.

Tejgaon police, however, failed to give the reason behind the killing till 6:00 yesterday evening.

Mohammadpur police retrieved the body of Rafiqul Islam, 35, from a swamp near Government Staff Quarters in Agargaon at about 9:30am, sources said.

Rafiq's family said he went missing since Sunday after he had left their West Kafrul house in the morning.

The man was a drug addict, police suspect.

Prayer Timing		
May 25		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-40	6-45
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

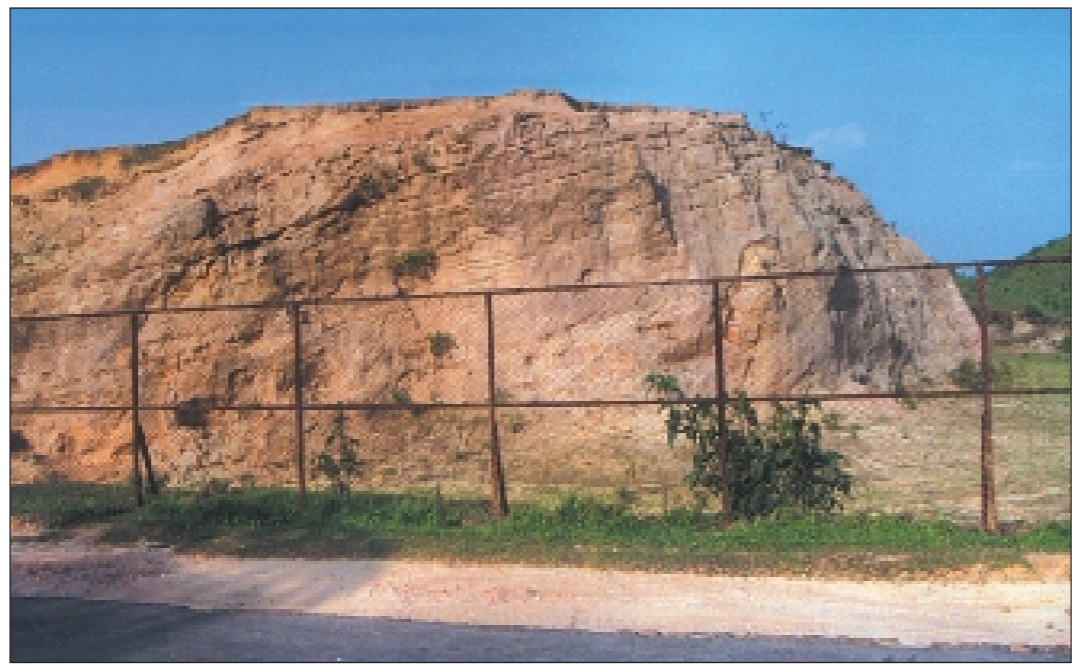


PHOTO: STAR

Hill cutting goes unabated in Sylhet defying a government ban. This picture taken last week shows a hillock within the fence of Osmani International Airport being chiseled away.

# UN examines Iraq handover plan

## Bush speech to try to win over an increasingly disillusioned Americans

BBC ONLINE

The US and UK have tabled a draft resolution at the UN detailing the scope of Iraqi sovereignty after the handover of power on June 30.

Talks are taking place on the text last night, which is expected to include limits to Iraqi powers and approval for a US-led force to remain in Iraq.

It is being presented hours before US President George W Bush delivers a live televised speech on Iraq's future.

Bush hopes to show that his Iraq plans are on track.

The draft UN resolution was being distributed to ambassadors for the 15 Security Council members during a closed-door meeting in New York.

Going into the meeting, British Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry said the draft text was the result of close consultations, and he hoped the resolution would make "early progress", with a vote in early June.

"It underlines clearly that all sovereignty will be returned to the Iraqis, that the interim Iraqi government will assume total responsibility for its own sovereignty," he told reporters.

Earlier, a senior British official said the draft resolution: states that the occupation is to end on 30 June and that there will be a sovereign Iraqi government; authorises a more prominent role for the UN in Iraq, including organising elections in December or January, devising new institutions and helping with constitutional talks; endorses and authorises the presence of foreign troops as a multinational force (MNF); makes clear that the interim government

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## PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

# Only 2 or 3 meet criteria

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

Most of the 52 private universities in the country do not fulfil the basic requirements under the Private University Act, 1992, including their own campus, faculty members, library and laboratory, members of an inquiry committee said.

"We have found in our probe so far only two or three meet the criteria," said a member of the committee formed by the University Grants Commission (UGC) to look into the status of private universities.

The UGC had formed the nine-member committee at the directive of the education ministry against the backdrop of widespread allegations of falling standard of education at the private universities, financial

mismangement, recruitment of teachers lacking required qualifications and various other irregularities.

The higher education watchdog wanted an on-the-spot probe as the committee did not receive proper response to a questionnaire prepared to evaluate the activities of private universities. Only a few of the 52 universities responded timely, two sought extension of time and the rest simply ignored it.

Private universities started coming up since February 1993. The Private University Act provides that every private university should have five acres of land for its own campus and a university should shift to its permanent campus from a temporary one within five years.

Some universities now offer six courses at graduate and postgraduate levels with only a few faculty members. Some others do not have any permanent faculty members and operate with part time teachers hired from public universities.

"Crisis of teachers is severe at private universities outside the capital and their standard of education is very poor," said the committee member.

The UGC laid down that every faculty should have at least four permanent faculty members, including one professor. But most private universities do not follow this criterion.

Over 40,000 students now study at the private universities, which

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# Blast near ruling HQ: 2 Britons die

## 1 GI, 18 Iraqis killed in separate attacks

AGENCIES, Baghdad

Guerrillas yesterday fired a rocket-propelled grenade at an entrance to a civilian vehicle in central Baghdad, killing at least two Britons and setting the car ablaze, officials say.

The four-wheel-drive armoured car was attacked near an entrance to Baghdad's "Green Zone" compound where the US-led coalition is based.

Security sources in the Iraqi capital said the car belonged to a private security company and that it was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade.

The US military said at least four people were killed, but a coalition

official said the death toll was two foreigners, with another foreigner seriously wounded.

US soldiers, Iraqi police and firefighters were quickly on the scene, dousing the burnt-out white all-terrain vehicle with water, sending clouds of steam and smoke into the air.

Soldiers said the blast flipped the car into the air. The busy road, which is lined with shops and leads to the Green Zone and the nearby Foreign Ministry, was sealed off.

Away at Fallujah, a US soldier died in a roadside bomb attack in which a marine's death was previously reported, the US military said yesterday.

"One US soldier and one US

marine were killed and several other US forces and one civilian contractor were wounded when attackers detonated an improvised explosive device," the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force said in a statement.

"Reports indicate the device was placed in a parked vehicle and detonated as two US convoys passed on the highway," the statement said.

The latest fatality brought the US military death toll in Iraq to 796 since the start of the US-led invasion in March 2003. This figure includes 580 troops killed in action.

Meanwhile, at least 18 Iraqis were

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## Tarique serves legal notice on Hasina for 'slander'

UNB, Dhaka

Tarique Rahman, senior joint secretary general of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), yesterday served a legal notice on Leader of the Opposition and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina and General Secretary Abdul Jalil for allegedly casting aspersions on him.

His lawyer Barrister Nawshad Jamir sent the notice by mail asking the AL leaders to reply within a week, retracting their "false and fabricated" statements against the ruling party leader and seeking apology for the comments.

"Otherwise, legal actions will be taken" against them, says the legal notice, indicating libel proceedings in case of noncompliance.

Tarique Rahman mentioned in

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## Jamaat denies link with JMJB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling coalition partner Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday denied having any ties to the recent bomb blast at Hazrat Shahjalal Shrine in Sylhet and Islamist outfit Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) headed by operations commander Bangla Bhai in the northwest.

Its Ameer Matiur Rahman Nizami in a written statement at a press conference said a vested quarter, in particular the leader of the opposition, is trying to divert the bomb attack on the British envoy to Bangladesh to another direction and save the guilty by mindlessly blaming the incident on his party.

Nizami, also the industries minister, termed the bomb attack 'barbaric' and said a powerful vested quarter carried it out to put

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PHOTO: STAR

A Chittagong trader, Nasir Uddin, after his rescue 23 hours into his abduction yesterday.

## AHSANULLAH KILLING

# IO asked to place charge sheet in a month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Home Lutfuzzaman Babar yesterday ordered the investigation officer (IO) in the Awami League lawmaker Ahsanullah Master murder case to immediately complete his investigation.

At a meeting of home ministry's monitor cell in the afternoon, he also directed the IO to submit chargesheet in the case within a month and arrest the accused

whose names appeared in the FIR (first information report) by any means, meeting sources said.

"The government is determined to arrest the killers of Ahsanullah Master MP," he said adding, "We have thoroughly discussed the matter and gave directives to the IO to do whatever is necessary."

The state minister also assured the IO of providing every possible logistic support in arresting the criminals.

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## Outlaws gun down UP chairman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Sarboharas shot dead the Union Parishad (UP) chairman of Jalla union in Uzirpur Upazila of the district in the early hours of yesterday.

The victim's family, police and local sources said Aboni Baroi, 48 was on his way home in Kurulia village at about 11:00pm when a gang of assailants shot him. Seriously wounded, Aboni in a desperate attempt to escape dived into a nearby canal right behind his house. But the killers caught him. They fired several more shots at him and confirming his death left the place.

Police and locals said, Aboni

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## Trader rescued 23 hours after abduction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police yesterday rescued a businessman 23 hours after his abduction and arrested five from Bibrhat but could not trace the medical student abducted from Muradpur on Sunday.

A gang picked up Nasir Uddin, 35, from near his house at 6:00pm Sunday and demanded Tk 5 lakh for his release.

A team of police raided a hideout in Bibrhat in the city in search of the medical student Nurul Azim and found Nasir, police sources said.

Police also arrested five people, including a woman -- Shohag, Sukumar Biswas, Rashed, Shahid and Shanu Akhter -- from the hideout and are quizzing them at Panchlaish Police Station. Police believe the same gang had kidnapped Azim and demanded a ransom of Tk 20 lakh.

Azim, son of Nur Mohammad Sikdar of Gujra village in Raozan and final year student of University of Science and Technology, Chittagong (USTC), was abducted by an armed gang from the vicinity of the Forestry Institute at 8:00am.

## Jamuna Group boss gets bail

UNB, Dhaka

Jamuna Group Chairman Nurul Islam Babul came out of Dhaka Central Jail yesterday afternoon.

He was granted bail by the High Court on Sunday in an attempted murder case filed with Badda Police Station eight months ago.

Babul, also owner of Bangla daily Jugantor, was received at the jail gate by editor of the daily Golam Sarwar, his colleagues and members of the family.

He was first arrested on March 20 at his Gulshan residence in connection with the murder of a dredger worker at Badda.

Since then he was implicated in four other cases one after another including attempt to rape of a housewife, explosion and abduction. He secured ad interim bail in all the cases from the court.