

## Power from Barapukuria plant in November

A CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

One unit of the 250 MW Barapukuria Power Plant in Dinajpur, the first coal-based power plant in the country, will start generation in November this year.

The plant will generate 125 MW electricity from one unit and double its production by March next year when the second unit will be in operation, according to officials at the plant.

This will greatly ease the power crisis in the northern districts, they said.

About 76 per cent work of the Tk 1650 crore plant has been completed, the officials informed State Minister for Power Iqbal Hasan Mahmood during his visit to the plant on Saturday. The plant will use coal from Barapukuria coal mine, which is yet to be ready for coal extraction.

The coal reserves are enough to feed the power plant for 30 years, the officials said.

The power plant is being built under the supervision of Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) officials.

During the visit, the State Minister asked project officials to complete the work in time to ease the power crisis in northern districts.

Besides load-shedding, low-voltage in power supply is affecting irrigation of IRRI-Boro lands during the peak season now. Many deep and shallow tube wells often trip due to low voltage, causing sufferings to farmers.

The State Minister held a meeting with Rajshahi divisional commissioner, deputy commissioners of eight districts and officials of PDB, Rural Electrification Board and Power Grid Company, Bangladesh and reviewed the power supply

situation.

The meeting took some decisions including introduction of load-staggering system for ensuring power supply for irrigation by shedding load in urban areas.

The minister also directed the deputy commissioners to create awareness among people, particularly owners of shopping centres, petrol pumps, laundry shops and welding factories to curtail power consumption during peak hours. Consumers who need high voltage have been advised to use generators during peak hours.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on April 23, 2003 inaugurated construction of the plant being built on 300 acres of land.

As the plant will not use any imported fuel, it will save 2000 million US dollars in 30 years, sources said.

## No rail tracks yet for coal supply to plant

A CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The Boropukuria coal mine project work is unlikely to be completed this month as scheduled earlier as laying of three kilometre rail tracks from Bhabanipur and 16 kilometre tracks from Maddhyapara hard rock project has become uncertain.

The coal to be extracted from the mine will be used in the Boropukuria thermal power plant.

The earthwork from Bhabanipur and Maddhyapara and the loading yard at Boropukuria have however been completed.

The work is being done by Korean firm CMC, which, in the middle of last year gave a contract to Bangladesh Railway to build the railway lines. The Railway selected a Rajshahi-based firm through tender to supply boulders and slippers for the track.

Work on track laying has not been started as these are yet to reach in the site though those were supposed to be supplied by December last year, sources said.

Fifteen hundred steel slippers

and 46,000 cft boulders will be needed, they said.

Sources at the coal mine project told this correspondent that at least two months would be needed to import stones and slippers from India.

Railway officials however said wooden slippers, now in stock, could be used if steel slippers are not available in time.

The Divisional Engineer of Railway's Western Zone-1 however told this correspondent that track laying all other related work will be completed before coal extraction begins.

The Boropukuria coal mine project is scheduled to be completed next month. It will produce 3300 tonnes of coal a day. A major portion of the coal will be consumed for power generation.

Sources said work is being delayed also because of labour unrest in the project. Labourers are demanding permanent jobs, but the authorities are reluctant, they said.

## Magura AL council now planned for March 31

### Date shifted thrice in 14 months due to clashes by rival factions

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Dogged by internal feud, Magura district Awami League (AL) has set a fresh date— March 31—for holding a council following a directive from the party high command.

The council was scheduled thrice in the last 14 months but could not be held due to internal feud. The last council was held in 1992.

Acting on a directive from AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, district AL convener Altaf Hossain on Saturday announced the fresh date for the council, much to the delight of dedicated party leaders and workers.

"In the district, top party posts are being held by some persons for years because council could not be held even nine years after expiry of the committee. This must end. Dynamic leadership must come forward to strengthen the party and the ongoing out-government movement", a leader seeking anonymity told this correspondent yesterday.

In the 1992 council, a committee was formed with Advocate Asaduzzaman MP and Altaf Hossain as president and general secretary.

After the death of Asaduzzaman in 1993, senior vice-president Abdul Kayum Mian was made acting president. This committee was dissolved on August 6, 2002 and a committee with Altaf Hossain as convener was formed to hold the council within three months. But it could not be held due to intra-party conflict, party insiders said.

They said rival leaders and activists at different levels are divided into two groups backed by convener Md Altaf Hossain and joint convener MS Akbar MP.

The internal feud surfaced in January last year when two rival factions clashed during party councils at several unions and upazilas. Both factions wanted their men in the leadership at different levels.

At least 14 incidents of clash took

place between the rival groups in last year.

The party high command summoned top district leaders to Dhaka on March 8 last year to resolve the dispute. Even, party chief Sheikh Hasina, at a meeting with the leaders in Dhaka, threatened to dissolve the district convening committee for its failure to hold a council.

But party chief's instruction went unheeded and the party split into two factions on September 7 last year.

The division became public when two rival factions brought out separate processions in the town protesting the August 21 grenade attack on Sheikh Hasina's rally in Dhaka.

Talking to The Daily Star, Altaf Hossain denied any intra-party conflict and said that the council could not be held due to the ongoing anti-government agitation. He however expressed the firm determination to hold the council on March 31.

## Toll demanded from Kalaroa college principal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A group of miscreants on Sunday demanded illegal toll amounting to Tk one lakh from Kalaroa Government College principal.

A self-styled organisation, Golden Life claimed the amount from Principal Sukumar Das through a letter sent to him by post. They also threatened him to face the dire consequence for non-payment of the toll. On receipt of the letter, the principal and his family members are passing their days in great panic.

The college teachers' association has demanded of the authorities their full security.

Kalaroa police told this correspondent, adequate security measures have been to ensure the safety and security of the principal and his family. A similar letter was sent to another teacher of Palli Mongal High School in the town.



Doctors on round at a ward in Lutheran Health Care, Bangladesh at Dumki upazila, Patuakhali.

PHOTO: STAR

## A hospital with a difference

### Lutheran Health Care, Bangladesh (LHCB) treats poor patients at nominal costs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A clinic of Dumki upazila, Lutheran Health Care Bangladesh (LHCB), has been rendering commendable health care service to poor people at a nominal fee.

Since its inception in 1995, as many as 13,8,986 patients received healthcare service from the clinic, funded by two foreign donor agencies, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and Division for Global Mission (DGM) till February 28 this year, according to LHCB Assistant Director Tarun Kr Daring.

The clinic provides service, specially to mother and children. Pregnant mothers and children under five are treated at Tk 20 only. A

nominal fee is charged for caesarian operation, Ultra-sound, ECG and pathological tests. There is a poor fund for treatment deserving poor patients.

Established on five acres of land in Shrirampur, the 18-bed clinic has a well-equipped operation theatre (OT), a pathological laboratory and a rich pharmacy with outpatient department.

Service is being provided to male and female patients from the outpatient department for five days a week.

Four physicians, trained in woman and child diseases attend patients regularly.

A team of physicians from the US visit the clinic every year and render

health care service to poor patients. Poor patients receive medicine free of cost from the clinic.

LHCB also organises mobile clinic to render services to outreach people of remote areas in Bauphal and Dashmina upazila two days a week.

Basic health education is also provided to women from the clinic to make them aware about primary health care including nutrition, safe delivery, family planning, immunisation, safe water and sanitation.

In the meantime, the clinic has installed over 100 deep tube-wells to ensure safe water to community people.

## 8 AL leaders join BNP in Rajshahi

RU CORRESPONDENT

Eight Awami League (AL) ward commissioners of Bhabaniganj municipality in Bagmara joined BNP on Sunday at a simple function held at Shonadighi BNP office in Rajshahi city.

They are Bhabaniganj AL President Abdul Hassan, Vice-president Anisur Rahman, Krishal League President Zayed Ali, General Secretary Abdul Jalil, Shechhashebok League President Abdul Majid and AL leaders Saiful Islam and Ferdousi Ara.

They were accorded a reception, attended by Rajshahi City Corporation Mayor (RCC) Mizanur Rahman Minu MP as chief guest.

Bhabaniganj municipal BNP President Abdur Razzak and General Secretary Asrafal Alam, and other BNP leaders were also present.

Speaking on the occasion they said they joined BNP, imbued by the ideals of the party.

## ATTACK ON MADRASA Protest rally gives 48-hour deadline for culprits' arrest

CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Teachers and students of Borhanuddin Darul Ulum Kaomi and Keratia Madrasa, joined by a large number of local people, held a rally and brought out a procession in Bhola town on Sunday, protesting Saturday night's attack on the madrasa and an adjoining mosque, allegedly by some BNP activists supporting local party MP Hafiz Ibrahim.

As tension mounted in Borhanuddin over the incident, Bhola Deputy Commissioner and Police Superintendent visited the spot and assured the madrasa authorities of action against the attackers.

At least fifty students of the madrasa were injured in the attack, made apparently to take possession of a land now under its possession, sources claimed. One of the students is missing, they said.

## Tk 3.2 lakh snatched

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Taka 3.20 lakh of Amir Oil Mill was snatched from one of its employees in the town yesterday.

Police said a gang of miscreants intercepted Amanullah Aman at Char Khamber in the afternoon while he was going to Al Arafah Bank at Chitra Cinema Square to deposit the money. They snatched a bag containing the amount from the employee at gunpoint and left the scene immediately.

Being informed, Kotwali police rushed to the spot and asked the locals about the incident. They took Amanullah into custody for interrogation.

## Buses keep off Magura-Jessore road

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Buses are off the Magura-Jessore highway since Friday, causing sufferings to travelers.

Sources said the undeclared strike is due to a hitch between Magura Bus Owners Association (MBOA) and Jessore Bus Owners Association (JBOA), following which, buses from either district are not crossing the Simakhali bridge on the border of the two districts.

JBOA President Bhushan Ghosh and General Secretary Wahiduzzaman in a joint statement yesterday urged district administrations in Magura and Jessore to intervene to resolve the dispute.

## 3 unions in Kurigram fully sanitised

RAFIQUE SARKER, back from Kurigram

Three unions of Fulbari upazila in Kurigram district have been declared totally sanitised.

Kurigram Deputy Commissioner (DC) Azizur Rahman Mollah formally declared this at a colourful function in Fulbari on March 9.

Fulbari Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Mahmud Hasan, Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) Executive Engineer Salauddin, six Union Parishad (UP) chairmen, UP members, teachers and students of educational institutions including local elite were present on the occasion.

Fulbari is the second upazila in the country which has been brought under total sanitation.

Last year, Rajarhat upazila was declared fully sanitised, Kurigram DC

told a group of visiting newsmen.

Fulbari UNO Mahmud Hasan in close collaboration with the concerned UP chairman, members and local elite launched the sanitation programme in Borovita union on December 10 last year.

2004. Within 20 days of its launching, 4,883 families in the union were brought under sanitation coverage.

Being inspired, people of five other unions became interested and began to build sanitary latrines themselves. Because of spontaneous participation of people from all walks of life, the sanitation programme succeeded, Fulbari UNO told journalists.

A number of committees comprising imams of mosques, teachers of educational institutions and concerned UP ward members worked together to make the programme a success.



A partial view of the enthusiastic crowd that gathered at Fulbari upazila headquarter on March 9 when three unions were declared fully sanitised.

PHOTO: STAR

## SNAPS

### 3-day agri-tech fair opens in Rajshahi

RU CORRESPONDENT

A three-day Agriculture Technology Fair-2005 began at Alipur Primary School in Durgapur upazila on Sunday. Advocate Nadim Mustafa MP opened the fair as chief guest. Film shows have been arranged for farmers to make them aware about modernisation of agriculture through the latest technology. Open discussions will also be held. The fair will remain open from 8.30 in the morning till 9 at night every day.

### Seized bomb defused by Rangpur police

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

The powerful bomb which was seized from Alhajnar in Kotwali police station on Friday was defused cautiously in Rangpur Police Lines here on Sunday. A police officer, preferring anonymity, told this correspondent, the bomb was very powerful and sophisticated, although it was locally made. It was installed with a battery connected with a pair of cable. The police officer told journalists it was a remote control bomb which possessed the power of collapsing a two-storied building easily. Army experts kept the bomb in water for 60 hours to lessen its power. However, there had been no headway in the police investigation till filing of the report.

### Tk 50,000 hemp seized from boat, 2 nabbed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Ashuganj police on Sunday seized 20-kilogram of hemp worth Tk 50,000 and arrested two persons from a boat in the Meghna. A police team headed by Ashuganj Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Md Azam raided the boat near the ferry 'ghat' (terminal) and recovered the hemp. The arrested persons are Sohail alias Sohag, 24, son of Abdul Khaleque and Shohrab, 26, son of Shipzul Islam of Sreenagar village in Bhairab in Kishoreganj. They were sent to jail custody, according to the order of a magistrate.

### Ctg Veterinary College convocation on Thursday

CU CORRESPONDENT

The third convocation of Chittagong Government Veterinary College will be held on Thursday. Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman will attend it as chief guest. Commonwealth Veterinary Association Secretary Dr S Abdur Rahman and Chittagong University Vice-Chancellor Prof A JM Nuruddin Chowdhury will attend as special guests. A day-long exhibition of pet animals will also be held at the college ground on Friday.