



Dhaka City Corporation dismantles various structures on the footpath at North South Road yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## New policy to encourage small power plants

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The energy and power ministry has drafted a policy to award contract to anyone without any competition to set up small power plants ranging from 10 megawatts to 50 megawatts.

The existing policy filters out incompetent or insolvent bidders and dictates open tender. The policy also restricts the maximum capacity of such a plant to 30 megawatts.

"We have a lot of power shortage. If the government approves this policy, there will be a lot of new small

power plants in the next six months and that will bring in some relief," quips Energy Minister AKM Mosharrif Hossain while talking to reporters at his office yesterday.

He said these plants will get gas supplies at the same rate offered to the Power Development Board (PDB)- Tk 73 per thousand cubic feet (tcf) per day.

The Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) will regulate these small plants.

The power developers will fix their power tariff upon discussion with the

ERC if their customers are direct.

If they want to sell power to the PDB or the Rural Electrification Board (REB), they will follow the same pricing formula applied to other private power schemes.

The PDB last year floated a tender for 15 such power plants with maximum capacity of 30 megawatts.

When the bid selection was final with a Bangladeshi power company Summit leading the bidders, the government cancelled the tender.

The government then asked the Power Cell to float the same tender.

The Power Cell was supposed to float it earlier this month.

However, pressure from businessmen involved in BNP politics led the government to consider lifting qualifying restrictions, sources said.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman last month first hinted that the government is considering awarding small power plants on the basis of selection instead of competition.

## Minority issue discussed

Harry meets Bhuiyan

BSS, Dhaka

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday said United States has been extending cooperation in the developing activities of Bangladesh.

The minister said this when US Ambassador Harry K Thomas called on him at his secretariat office here.

After the meeting, the US ambassador told newsmen that he had a discussion with the minister about curbing terrorism as well as government's active role to protect the interests of the minorities in Bangladesh.

Bhuiyan said the modernisation of Bangladesh police force also came up for discussion during the meeting.

The US government has provided training to Bangladesh Army, including those who are working as peace keeping forces in various trouble spots of the world under the umbrella of United Nations, he said.

Bhuiyan hoped that the US government would continue support for the overall development of Bangladesh in the days to come.

## CTG DRIVER MURDER Proper investigation demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Leaders of the Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Chittagong unit, yesterday demanded proper investigation into the murder of bus driver Ashraf Ali, which took place on October 1, 2004.

At a press conference, they also demanded immediate arrest of the killers.

Hosne Ara Begum, mother of Ashraf Ali, alleged that the BNP cadres aligned with Kalipur UP chairman, an accused in the Banskhalii carnage case, killed his son.

The Parishad leaders said the armed cadres of the chairman called Ashraf out of his home and strangled him on the night of October 1. Later, they dumped his body in a bush, close to Ashraf's home in Banskhalii.

Acting President of the Parishad Noorjahan Khan read out a written statement at the press conference held at the Chittagong Press Club.

Senior lawyer and a trustee of the Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust (BLAST) Rana Das Gupta, Blast Coordinator in Chittagong Advocate Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, former general secretary of district bar association Monotosh Barua and Parishad leaders Jesinta Dais, Shirin Akhtar, Noor-e-Asma and Sumi Khan were present.



PHOTO: STAR

Mohammad Hossain Basan, a candidate for the post of ward commissioner in the by-election at Ward No. 63 in the city, was injured as the supporters of his rival assaulted him during the election yesterday.

## Tasnuva held in US for illegal stay

BDNEWS, Dhaka

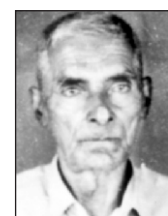
The case of Tasnuva Hayder, a Bangladeshi teenage girl detained by US authorities in New York, is a consular matter and a case of illegal stay, the foreign ministry said yesterday.

According to a message received from Bangladesh Consulate General office in New York, Hayder has been detained for violation of immigration laws and the date of hearing of the case is May 11, 2005.

"However, the Consulate General office in New York is trying to advance the date of hearing to help the girl," said a release of the foreign ministry.

An officer of Bangladesh Consulate General office had a telephonic discussion with Tasnuva Hayder, who is under custody, and it appeared to be a consular matter and could be resolved as per usual procedure, it said.

## Death anniversary



The fourth death anniversary of Surendra Nath Halder, father of Chaitanya Chandra Halder, court correspondent of The Daily Star, will be observed today, says a press release.

Recitation from the Geeta, religious song, discussion and a prayer session have been arranged at his village home at Nayakandi Bajitpur in Rajoir, Madaripur.

"But regrettably the US mainstream media, The New York Times and the CNN, covered the detention of the girl in a way that portrayed her as a potential suicide bomber," said the release.

The New York Times on April 7 reported that two 16-year-old girls from New York City, including one Bangladeshi, were arrested and charged with immigration violations after the FBI asserted that they intended to become suicide bombers.

Their families, however, said the accusation was false and the government had probably misinterpreted a school essay written by the Bangladeshi girl, according to the NY Times report.

Quoting a government document, the New York Times and other leading US dailies reported that the girls are being held in a family detention centre in Leesport, in southeastern Pennsylvania, after their arrest on March 24.

## Obituary

Hafiza Samad, wife of former deputy commissioner late MA Samad and mother of Irtiza Nasim Ali, chief editor of the Probe News Magazine, passed away at Labaid Cardiac Centre in the city yesterday at the age of 74, says a press release.

She had long been suffering from heart ailments.

She is survived by one son, four daughters and a number of grandchildren.

## Hasina greets new Pope

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina has congratulated Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger of Germany on his election as the 265th Pope of the Roman Catholic Church.

In a message yesterday, Hasina hoped that the newly appointed pontiff would follow the example of glorious contributions made by late Pope John Paul II in establishing peace, humanity and human rights.

She wished him good health and long life and his success in welfare of the humanity.

Archbishop Michael Rozario of Dhaka also congratulated the new Pope.

In a message, he hoped that the Pope would play his due role as the angel of peace during his tenure.

The Christian Writers' Forum also congratulated the newly elected Pope.

## SC stays AL leader Manik's bail

UNB, Dhaka

Responding to a government plea, the Supreme Court (SC) yesterday stayed for two weeks the operation of the High Court (HC) order that had granted bail to former Awami League lawmaker Mohibur Rahman Manik in the Chhatak explosion case.

After brief hearing from both sides, Chamber Judge Amirul Kabir Chowdhury passed the order and asked the government to file a regular appeal.

A High Court division bench comprising justices AK Badrul Huq and M Fazlur Rahman granted bail to Manik on Monday despite attorney's objection. Manik was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for the incident.

The explosion took place at the residence of Manik at Chhatak in Sunamganj district on March 15, 1999 that left two people killed.

The Speedy Trial Tribunal, Sylhet, convicted Manik and others under Explosive Substance Act and sentenced each of them to 10 years rigorous imprisonment on October 9 last year.

Additional Attorney General Abdur Rezaq Khan moved the petition while Barrister Amir-Ul Islam appeared for Manik.

## Evolve tech to fight salinity problem

Minister urges scientists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts at an agricultural planning meeting yesterday underscored the need for augmenting food production in saline-prone zones in the country and called for providing farmers with technologies to combat the salinity problem.

The four-day-long first annual review and planning meeting of an international project titled 'Development of Technologies to Harness the Productivity Potential of Salt-affected Areas of the Indo-Gangetic, Mekong and Nile River Basins' began at Brac Centre Inn in the city with the Head of the Social Science Division of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) Dr Mahabub Hossain in the chair.

Speaking as chief guest at the inaugural session, State Minister for Agriculture Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir urged the scientists to come up with new technologies so that farmers could combat the growing problem of salinity in the coastal belts.

The minister asserted that unplanned shrimp and pisciculture have to be regulated.

Dr Mahabub Hossain under-

scored the need for bridging the gap between agricultural research and extension.

He said through better water management, farmers would be able to grow more crops.

Earlier, project leader Abdel Ismail gave an overview of the project while IRRI Liaison Scientist in Bangladesh Dr Hamid Miah delivered the welcome speech.

Experts from home and abroad are taking part in the meeting.

## AL leaders seek vote for Mohiuddin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Awami League central leaders Suranjit Sengupta and Obaidul Kader yesterday joined polls campaign for party leader and Nagorik Committee-backed mayoral candidate ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury in the Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) polls scheduled for May 9.

They addressed a public meeting at Tiger Pass Ambagan School ground seeking electoral support for Mohiuddin, also incumbent mayor.

Meanwhile, the BNP-led ruling alliance-backed mayoral candidate Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin, also state minister for civil aviation and tourism, surrendered his protocol facilities on Tuesday night, hours after the Election Commission allotted polls symbols.

The Nagorik Committee in a letter to Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) Commissioner yesterday sought one platoon of police for the security of Mohiuddin.

When contacted, CMP Commissioner Amjad Hossain said as the incumbent mayor, he is already getting security from the government. "If we give him extra force, then 20 more mayoral candidates might seek similar security. It is not possible for us to do that," he added.

At the public meeting, Suranjit described Mohiuddin as a tested friend and leader of Chittagong people and urged all to vote for him again to continue the development work in the port city.

Obaidul Kader said Mohiuddin has proved he is ready to make any sacrifice for the development of Chittagong.

The two leaders might stay here for two days this time and would come back again in the first week of May, AL sources said.

## 'Create alternative jobs for tobacco workers'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government must create alternative employment opportunities for bidi and cigarette industry workers or repeal the anti-tobacco law, hundreds of tobacco workers demanded at a rally in the city yesterday.

"The newly enacted anti-smoking law will not be practicable without making arrangements for alternative employment for the workers dependent on the bidi and cigarette industry," said Dr Wazed Ali of Bangladesh Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad.

This law will render fifty lakh bidi factory workers jobless, said the leaders of the National Coordination Committee of Bangladesh Bidi-Cigarette Workers and Tobacco Cultivators, which organised the rally at Paltan Maidan.

They placed a nine-point demand, including repeal of the law, alternative employment, clear definition of the law to stop its abuse by police and incentive for the bidi workers.

They also threatened to declare tougher agitation programmes on May 30 if their demands are not met by May 20.

"Enactment of the new law is a part of a foreign conspiracy to close down the local industry and market the foreign tobacco products here," said Haidar Ali Khan, a committee leader.

Hundreds of bidi and cigarette workers and tobacco cultivators from Rangpur, Chandpur, Pirojpur, Barisal, Kishoreganj, Tangail and Sherpur joined the rally, chaired by committee convener Karim Uddin Bharsha MP.



PHOTO: STAR

National Coordination Committee of Bangladesh Bidi-Cigarette Workers and Tobacco Cultivators stage a demonstration in the city yesterday demanding repeal of the anti-tobacco law.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) forms a human chain in front of the Rajdhani Unnayan Katrapakkha (Rajuk) in the city yesterday.

## GARMENT FACTORY COLLAPSE

### 'Punish all responsible for tragedy'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a rally yesterday demanded exemplary punishment to the persons responsible for the garment factory collapse at Savar that claimed heavy loss of lives.

They also called for an impartial investigation to ascertain the responsibilities of the garment owner as well as concerned government organisations for the accident.

The rally-cum-human chain was organised by the Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) in front of the Rajdhani Unnayan Katrapakkha (Rajuk) in the city.

"Some high-ups of the government are now trying to divert the Savar tragedy to different track to protect the persons responsible for the incident," Bapa General Secretary Mofidul Haque Khan alleged.

The garment owner has not been arrested so far, although the experts have already confirmed that poor construction as well as weak founda-

tion was the reason for the factory collapse, he aggrieved.

"The government's sincerity to find out the persons responsible for the mishap is now questionable, as proper investigation is not being conducted," Mofidul pointed out.

"The garment owners do not bother about the safety of the workers, rather they consider the poor workers as profit making machine," Bapa Executive Member Sharif Jamil said.

The garment factories have turned into death traps owing to unplanned construction of factories and insufficient security arrangement, he added.

The speakers also demanded sufficient compensation for the families of the victims.

Bapa Joint Secretaries Dr MA Matin and Zakir Hossain, Executive Member engineer Iqbal Habib, Dr Nur Uddin of Seba, and Dr Abdul Hye Majumder of Peace also spoke.

# DHAKA

T O D A Y

---

**Eid-e-Miladunnabi**

The inaugural ceremony of a fortnight-long programme, undertaken by the Islamic Foundation, Bangladesh in observance of holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi, will be held with President Iajuddin Ahmed as chief guest. Venue: Baitul Mukarram National Mosque. Time: 7.00pm.

**Discussion**

Bangladesh Krishak League will hold a discussion to mark its 33rd founding anniversary with Awami League President Sheikh Hasina as chief guest. Venue: Institution of Engineers' Auditorium, Ramna. Time: 3.00pm.

**Conference**

The opening ceremony of a three-day national conference and central council-05 of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Sramik Jole will be held. Venue: Dhaka District Sports Association Auditorium, Motijheel. Time: 3.00pm.

**Roundtable**

Jatiya Shikshak Karmochari Front organises a roundtable on 'Human development-education-government allocation' where a keynote paper will be presented by Dr Abul Barakat, general secretary of Bangladesh Economic Association. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3.00pm.

**IUB programme**

The Wild Life and Nature Conservation Society of Bangladesh and the Green Sphere of Independent University, Bangladesh jointly organise a programme on the event of Earth Day. Venue: IUB Campus, Baridhara. Time: 10.00am.

**Seminar**

The Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs organises a seminar on 'Results of the Second World War and their significance in current international relations' with Russian Ambassador Oleg S Malginov as keynote speaker. Venue: Institute's Auditorium, Dhanmondi. Time: 11.00am.

**Meeting**

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association organises an opinion sharing meeting on disaster management. Venue: IDB Auditorium, Agargaon. Time: 9.30am.

**Recital**

The Muldhara, a forum of writers, journalists and artists, organises a session of poetry recitation. Venue: House-15, Road-7, Dhanmondi. Time: 6.30pm.

**Science fair**

Spectrum International School is organising a science fair, with Science and ICT Minister Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan as chief guest. Venue: School premises. Time: 11.00am to 3.00pm.

**Musical evening**

The Commitment Products presents a musical evening with children. Venue: Bishwa Sahitya Kendra. Time: 7.00pm.

**FEJB seminar**

The Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh will hold a seminar on 'Earth Day: Protect our children and our future'. Venue: FEJB conference room. Time: 9.30am.

# DHAKA

T O M O R R O W

**Discussion**

In observance of Eid-e-Miladunnabi, Masjidul Jami' A of Dhaka University will hold a discussion on the life of Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (SM). It will be followed by a milad mahfil. Venue: Masjid premises. Time: 6.30pm.

**Bangla Academy**

The Bangla Academy will hold a discussion on 'Humanist Hazrat Mohammad (SM)' to mark the holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi. Venue: Seminar room of the academy. Time: 5.00pm.

**Grand conference**

On the occasion of holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi, a grand conference of Ashkane Maizbandari Association will be held with Maulana Syed Mujibul Bashar Maizbandari as chief guest. Venue: Paltan Maidan. Time: 10.00am.

**Film show**

The Muldhara, a forum of writers, journalists and artists, will screen two films titled 'Lucky' and 'Double Team'. Venue: House-15, Road-7, Dhanmondi. Time: 3.30pm and 6.30pm.