

# Ashuganj power plant needs thorough overhaul

*Bangladesh engineers can do the job, need decision by higher authorities, says its MD*

**SHEIKH SHAHIDUL ISLAM, B'baria**

Ashuganj power plant, the second biggest electricity producing unit in the country, is gradually losing its generating capacity due lack of overhauling for long.

Bangladeshi engineers can overhaul the plant but the initiative can not be taken due to lack of decision by higher authorities, its Managing Director Md Shahidur Rahman Khan told this correspondent.

The plant now generates 400 to 459 mw electricity a day against its capacity of 688 mw, other sources in the plant said.

There are seven units in the plant and all of them have crosses their time limit.

Unit-1 with a capacity to produce 64 mw electricity is idle now. Only two units 64 mw Unit-2 and 150 mw Unit-3 -- are operating optimally. Unit-4 is generating 85 mw power against its capacity of 150 mw and Unit-5 is producing 80 mw against 150 mw. Unit-6 (gas turbine-1) generates 40 mw power against its capacity of 55 mw and Unit-7 (gas

turbine-2) generates 40 mw out of 55 mw.

The plant was set up with two units in 1966 with assistant from the then West German government. Five units were added with financial assistance World Bank and other donors. All the seven units started operation in 1988, producing 688 mw power.

As days passed, their generation capacity declined due to lack of overhauling. At least one unit remains inoperative now while the rest also often falter.

Unit-1 is inoperative since April 28 following leakage in its boiler tube, which is yet to be repaired.

The sources however said Bangladeshi engineers and staff of the plant are working to repair the unit.

The plant is in such a rundown condition that, five units stopped generation at a time about 10 months back. Local engineer restored the operation. Again, a few days later, three units stopped generation at a time.

Suspension of power generation in one or two units is now almost a

regular feature, the sources said.

Seeking anonymity, an official said all the units have crossed their time for overhauling two to three years ago. Only one unit has been overhauled.

Most of the machinery and equipment in the rest six units are in dilapidated conditions and may stop generation any time, they said.

Replying to a question, the MD said Bangladeshi engineers can overhaul the plant but we can not take any decision as it involves a huge amount of money. At least Tk five crore will be needed to overhaul one unit, he said.

Bangladeshi engineers are capable of overhauling all the units if equipment is supplied, he added.

In the past, local engineers did major repair works successfully and saved huge amounts of foreign currency. They overhauled the Gas Turbine-1 in June last year and save at least Tk 10 crore in foreign currency, he said.

Overhauling of a unit must be done after every 50,000 hours of operation but the units are in opera-

tion for 80,000 to 1,50,000 hours without overhauling.

The last overhauling of Unit-1 was done in 1989, Unit-2 in 1994 and Unit-3 in 2003. Unit-4 and Unit-5 have not been overhauled since their installation in 1987 and 1988 respectively.

Several leakages have been created in the condense tube and boiler tube in Unit-4 and Unit-5.

Md. Shahidur Rahman Khan said once foreign engineers were need even for repair. Local engineers can now do the repair and overhauling work.

He said the demand for power is increasing day by day but the plants generation is decreasing.

The authorities concerned should take a decision immediately to overhaul six units of the plant to avert any unhappy situation that will affect a large number of people in Brahmanbaria and surrounding areas.

## 10-month baby kidnapped from court premises

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A 10-month-old baby was kidnapped from his sister's lap on Bagerhat court premises on Tuesday afternoon.

According to eye-witnesses, Shakib was kidnapped by two unidentified criminals at arms point from the lap of his 10-year-old sister Munni. At that time their mother Merina Akhter was talking to her arrested husband Forkan Mollick in front of court hajat.

Forkan of Swarankhola upazila of Bagerhat district was arrested on charge of selling timber illegally last year.

## Beaten for rare honesty!

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A rickshawpuller was severely beaten allegedly by a police constable when he went to Khulna thana at noon on Thursday to deposit Tk 10,000 he got on a city road.

Injured rickshawpuller Akhtaruzzaman, 28, told newsmen at Khulna Press Club that he got a bundle of Tk 10,000 on the road near Khulna thana at about 1-30 pm.

"I had no intention to misappropriate the money and so decided to hand it over to police as a gesture of my honesty. But I was beaten by a policeman instead of getting thanks.

When asked, the duty officer said the rickshawpuller was injured when some men attempted to snatch the money.

"We have already received it from rickshawpuller and have filed a general diary. Steps are being taken to hand over the money, he said.



PHOTO: STAR

Mouth-watering litchis have appeared in Chittagong city markets but their prices are higher. These are sold at between Tk 150 and 180 per hundred.

# UP leaders boycott meeting protesting MP's 'nepotism'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Six Union Parishad chairmen walked out of the Shyamnagar Upazila Development Co-ordination Committee meeting yesterday protesting alleged allotment of development funds to Jamaat-Islami workers by their party lawmaker.

The meeting began at the Upazila Nirbahi Officer's office with UP Chairman Gazi Shahjahan Siraj in the chair. All the chairmen attended the meeting.

As soon as Advisor of the committee and Jamat lawmaker Gazi Nazrul Islam approached the meeting venue, six UP chairmen belonging to Awami League (AL) left the

meeting protesting his presence, meeting sources said.

When asked, UNO Solaiman Mondal said, six UP chairmen 'boycotted' the meeting protesting the Jamaat lawmaker's presence.

Shyamnagar Sadar Union Parishad Chairman Jaglul Haider told this correspondent that they boycotted the meeting as the lawmaker distributed VGF (vulnerable group feeding) food grains through his party men, ignoring elected representatives.

The lawmaker is also implementing various development projects only through his party men, he alleged.

The UP chairmen complained that the lawmaker ignored opinion of the chairmen and distributed development funds through Jamaat men. Jamaat lawmaker Gazi Nazrul Islam could not be reached over phone despite repeated attempts.

When asked for his mobile phone number, a member of his family said, "He is out of mobile phone network now."

The chairmen who boycotted the meeting are Jaglul Haider (Sadar UP), Abdul Kader (Atulia UP), Asim Kumar Mridha (Munshigonj UP), Bakhtiar Ahmed (Noonagar UP), Anisuzzaman (Kashimari UP), Asim Kumar Joardar (PadmapukurUP) and Shafiq Azam Lenin (Gabura UP).

## 145 years of glory

*B'baria High School celebrates founding anniversary*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

It was a different day for the townspeople. They were in a festive mood, seeing dignitaries from different areas of the country and also from India leading a colourful procession to begin a two-day programme marking the 145th founding anniversary of Brahmanbaria High School.

Though the school is one of the oldest institutions in the country, this is the first founding anniversary.

Colourful functions have been chalked out for the two-day programme. The school was established in 1860.

Presence of so many dignitaries was a big boost for teachers and students of the school.

The procession began at 9:30 am. With a band party in the front, the procession was led by former students of the school-- State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Haque Milon, State Minister for Land Abdus Sattar Buiyan, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society Chairman Haroon-Al-Rashid MP, former state minister Humayun Kabir, former secretaries to government Faysof Ahmed Chowdhury and Md Shuhel Ahmed Chowdhury, Election Commission Secretary SM Jakaria, noted journalist Sayed Akter Yousuf Sanu, Major (Retd) Azizur Rahman Kamal and Indian dignitary Nirmal Kanti Barman.

Brahmanbaria Deputy Commissioner Md Saydur Rahman, Police Superintendent ATM Tareque and ADM Banamali Bhawmik were also in the procession.

Cheerful crowds on roadsides showered flower petals as over 3000 present and former students

marched the streets carrying various colourful banners and flags.

The processionists then gathered on the well decorated school campus where the chief guest, ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon, inaugurated the festival by hoisting the National Flag and releasing colourful balloons.

Speaking on the occasion, the state minister advised the students to follow former brilliant students of the school to face the challenge of the future. There is no alternative to good education, he said.

Brahmanbaria Poursabha Chairman Hafizur Rahman Mulla Kachi and headmaster of the school Abul Khasem also addressed the function, presided over by ADM Banamali Bhowmik.

The programme includes seminar, cultural functions and meetings.

## Joint survey of Sonai river begins

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Land Record and Survey Department (LRSD) officials of Bangladesh and India on Wednesday visited common Sonai river to erect pillars in the river.

They visited Bhadiali, Keragachi and Charabaria villages in Kalaroa upazila on the Bangladesh side.

The Bangladesh team comprised LRSD Director General Abu Haidar, Satkhira Additional Deputy Commissioner Humayun Kabir and Sadar UNO SM Ashrafuzzaman.

13x3



PHOTO: STAR

A partial view of the Adivashi conference, held in Bogra yesterday.

## Bogra dist Adivashi confce held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

The first conference of Bogra District Adivashi Committee was held at the Zila Parishad auditorium here yesterday.

It was attended by hundreds of indigenous people.

Jatiyo Adivashi Parishad general secretary Rabindranath Soren was the chief guest.

The conference was addressed, among others, by the committee's Joypurhat unit president Babul Rabidas, organising secretary Kamol Mingi, Bogra district commit-

tee's former convener Raton Rabidas and general secretary of Natore unit Prodig Lakra.

The conference was presided over by Khogen Chandra Roy, a leader of Bogra distinct unit.

Raton Kumar Rabidas and Hridoy Kamor Roy became the new president and secretary of a 15-member Bogra District Adivashi Committee.

The speakers urged the government to establish human rights, justice and social security for the ethnic community.

10x3