

Contractor accused of sabotaging power plant

RPCL checks legal aspects to cancel contract with Lahmeyer

SHARIER KHAN

The Rural Power Company Ltd (RPCL) is scrutinising legal provisions to cancel the operation and maintenance contract with Lahmeyer International Palli Power Services Ltd (LIPPS) for sabotaging the 140 megawatt (MW) Mymensingh RPCL plant, a well-

placed source said.

LIPPS is accused of wholesale corruption, tender manipulation and exercise of unauthorised power. The over-riding influence of LIPPS had kept the RPCL hostage for a long time.

On Thursday last, LIPPS officials engaged in a serious confrontation with the high officials of RPCL, its

parent organisation, the Rural Electrification Board (REB), police and magistrates. LIPPS finally shut down the 140MW two-unit power plant and fled the area.

"According to the law, any shut down of a power plant requires clearance from the Power Development Board [PDB]. The BA flight, set to leave ZIA for Heathrow at 8:30am, flew three hours behind schedule without the

TERROR HOAX

Six removed from BA flight, later released

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three Bangladesh-born Britons and as many Moroccans were removed from a London-bound British Airways (BA) flight at Zia International Airport (ZIA) yesterday on suspicion of a 'terror attack.'

However, the six were released after intelligence agencies found no evidence of their link to any such attack.

The BA flight, set to leave ZIA for Heathrow at 8:30am, flew three hours behind schedule without the

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BANGABANDHU MURDER CASE

A victim of reluctance

ZAYADUL AHSAN

The Bangabandhu Murder Case is a glaring example of how the fate of a case hangs in the balance because of the judges' reluctance to hear it and the government's sheer indifference to the appointment of judges needed for its disposal.

The historic case, pending with the highest court for the last four years, is unlikely to be disposed of in the next two years unless the government appoints at least two judges to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court (SC).

At least three judges are needed

to form a bench but only one among the seven sitting judges in the Appellate Division can hear the case. Of them, two have already heard the case, three felt embarrassed and one has become the chief election commissioner (CEC).

The government is doing nothing to elevate judges from the High Court Division to the Appellate Division on ad hoc basis to expedite disposal of the case that has been pending since August 2001 for shortage of judge.

One may call it a coincidence but the fact is hearing of this case has not taken place for a single day

since the BNP-led government came to power in October 2001.

Moreover, the government has stopped the process of bringing the convicted killers back from abroad. A taskforce was set up during the previous Awami League (AL) regime but it was dissolved after the BNP-led coalition took office.

For 21 long years the trial of Bangabandhu murder was barred by Indemnity Ordinance, which was later legalised through parliament. Still, there is no other instance in world history where the killers of a head of state were indemnified by law.

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Manmohan may visit Dhaka later this year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is likely to visit Bangladesh later this year, a highly placed source said yesterday.

The source said the visit by the Indian premier would be in response to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's invitation and it might be in November after the 13th Saarc summit in Dhaka.

"The visit may be separate or an extension of the Indian premier's stay in Dhaka following the Saarc summit," the source added.

The high official source said Khaleda Zia might visit India early

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Natwar visit signals thawing of relations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"Positive and constructive" dialogues during Indian External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh's visit to Dhaka have seemingly put an end to the recent standstill in the Indo-Bangladesh relations.

Both the countries attached the highest importance on developing good neighbourly relations and expressed their commitment to strengthen the ties by removing all irritants through dialogue on the basis of friendship, trust and understanding.

The trip of Natwar Singh, the first

ever by any Indian minister since the Congress-led alliance government came to power in India about 15 months ago, is certainly an ice-melting one, said a high official of the Ministry of Foreign Ministry here.

"We have reestablished the contact at the highest level in the spirit of cordiality and goodwill. In fact there was no subject that we did not touch. This will continue as we are both devoted to improving our relations," said Natwar Singh prior to his departure, ending his three-day official tour.

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Indian Minister of External Affairs Natwar Singh shakes hands with his Bangladesh counterpart M Morshed Khan at Zia International Airport prior to his departure for New Delhi yesterday.

New warm-up sign in Morshed gesture

UNB, Dhaka

In an apparent pleasant surprise, Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan yesterday showed up at Zia International Airport (ZIA) to personally see off his guest, Indian External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh, who left for home ending his high-profile Bangladesh visit.

Under the latest protocol being followed, Morshed was not expected at the airport to see his guest off, as both of them exchanged farewell greetings at the dinner hosted by Indian High Commissioner Veena

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Clearing agents won't work from tomorrow

NBR sits with ACA again to end port stalemate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Association of Customs Agents (ACA), a federation of the clearing and forwarding (C&F) agents associations in the country, yesterday decided to impose work abstention in all the customs houses across the country from tomorrow.

Meanwhile, a long meeting between the federation leaders and the National Board of Revenue (NBR) in the evening discussed the

issues and decided to form a seven-member committee that will suggest measures to settle the dispute in its report to be submitted in a week.

The federation leaders will again sit with the NBR today for further discussion.

"The disputes are yet to be solved. We hope we can keep the work abstention programme suspended following the talks with the NBR officials," Abul Fazal Talukder, (NBR) in the evening discussed the

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Media gag at EC finally withdrawn

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The restrictions by the Election Commission (EC) secretariat officials that held back the two election commissioners from expressing opinions to the press were lifted yesterday following severe criticism from every corner.

After withdrawal of the restrictions, Election Commissioner AK Mohammad Ali at his office yesterday told journalists, "The decision of preparing a fresh voter roll was taken following tradition, but not lawfully. When there are laws, why follow tradition?"

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