

BNP, AL trade blames over TI graft tag

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling BNP and main opposition Awami League blamed each other for the country's becoming "the champion" in corruption for the fifth consecutive year.

Reacting to the Berlin based Transparency International (TI)'s corruption perception index (CPI) released yesterday, Information Minister M Shamsul Islam told The Daily Star that the country became champion in corruption for the first time during the rule of Awami League.

"We do not consider the report reliable, because it was prepared

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Tarique talks blasts with diplomats separately

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Senior Joint Secretary General of the ruling BNP Tarique Rahman recently had meetings with a number of foreign diplomats and discussed the August 17 serial blasts and the militant activities in the country.

A highly-placed source in the government said Tarique had separately met with the diplomats including the high commissioners and chiefs of securities of a few Commonwealth countries.

Tarique invited them in dinner and discussed the serial blasts and the attackers' possible link to international terrorists groups.

None of the cabinet members or any government representative took part in the meetings now

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GULSHAN-BANANI-BARIDHARA LAKE

Pollution turns severe as authorities sleep

PINAKI ROY

The water in all parts of the Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara Lake has become very stinky due to severe pollution occurring under the nose of the authorities.

Sewage and waste from the residential areas of Badda, Shadatpur, Baridhara, Gulshan and Banani have been being discharged into the lake for years. Factors such as sedimentation

and toxic contamination have already damaged the essential features of the lake, said environmentalists.

Rainwater during the monsoon washes away all the garbage and toxic material into the lake, causing death to a large number of fishes every year, local people said.

"Once we used to collect drinking water from the lake after it was dug 40 years ago," said Alauddin Mia, a retired employee of the American

Embassy living in Gulshan, section No. 2. "Now we do not even dare to touch the water," he added.

An inspection by The Daily Star on Sunday found that the bank at several parts of the lake has been covered with garbage and litters while the water has turned pitch-black. Wastewater was seen being discharged into the lake from several lakeside houses on roads No. 105 and 104.

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The photo shows a severely polluted part of the Gulshan-Baridhara-Banani Lake in front of Mariam Tower in Gulshan-2. The lake has been suffering from indiscriminate pollution for a long stretch of years, causing health hazards to the residents of the area.

Judges' retirement age extended to pick loyal caretaker head, says Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the present government had extended retirement age for the judges in order for the ruling coalition to have a loyal person as the chief advisor of the caretaker government.

Hasina, also the president of the main opposition Awami League (AL), said Justice KM Hasan, supposed to

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'Killer' Faruq dies in 'encounter' with cops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A top city goon Killer Faruq was killed and two policemen were injured in an 'encounter' with Detective Branch (DB) of police and members of Faruq's gang at a Nababerbagh intersection in the capital yesterday.

DB arrested Omar Faruq alias Killer Faruq, 26, at Tongi on Thursday. He was a top goon of

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Govt to set up 5 IPP plants in 7 months PM unhappy over prevailing power, gas crisis

UNB, Dhaka

The government yesterday decided to set up five independent power producer (IPP) plants, each having

50MW, in different places of the country as a quick solution to the ongoing power crisis.

Private sponsors will be asked to install the plants within the next 6-7 months so that the power supply situation in the next summer can be improved.

The decision was taken at a high-level emergency meeting convened by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office.

State Minister for Power Iqbal Hassan Mahmood, Energy Division Advisor Mahmudur Rahman, Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Kamal Siddiqui, Power Division Secretary

Nazrul Islam, Energy Division Secretary Nasir Uddin, PDB Chairman ANH Akhtar Hossain, Petrobangla Chairman SR Osmani were present at the meeting.

The IPP plants will be set up at Fenchuganj, Shahjibazar, Sylhet, Shikabaha and Khulna.

The meeting also decided to keep closed the newly installed 80MW Tongi plant until December next.

Sources said the prime minister expressed her resentment over the present gas and power crises across the country.

She directed the Power Division to take immediate steps to carry out maintenance and overhauling programmes in the next winter to ensure smooth operation of the power plants in the next summer.

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Power sector survives major debacle

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The power sector yesterday saved itself from a major debacle following sudden shutdown of two major power plants, as operators succeeded in restarting the plants within a few hours.

The country was officially having 580 megawatts (MW) of load shedding yesterday. If these two plants had not resumed operation, the load shedding would have reached 1150MW.

Power Development Board sources said around 11:00am yesterday the 360MW AES Haripur and the 210MW Ghorashal unit 3 power plants tripped abruptly.

"The Ghorashal unit had some problems with its cooling units. We are not yet sure what went wrong with the 360MW Haripur plant. But both of them resumed operation around 3:00pm," said a PDB source.

Yesterday the country's power plants had the generation capacity of 3340MW against an official demand projection of 3920MW.

Rebels gun down Kashmir minister Two guards, one visitor also killed in the attack

AFP, Srinagar

Kashmir rebels yesterday shot dead Indian Kashmir's junior education minister and three others in a daylight attack at his home in a high-security enclave in the main city Srinagar, authorities said.

Two men rode a motorbike early Tuesday into the fortified Tulsi Bagh area, home to senior politicians and bureaucrats, without being challenged by security, police said.

The attackers burst guns blazing into the house of Ghulam Nabi Lone, of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), who was pronounced dead on arrival at Soura Medical Institute, doctors said.

Two policemen and a visitor to Lone's bungalow also died along with one of the attackers in a fierce gunbattle. Two civilians and three security personnel were injured, said Social Welfare Minister Gulam Hassan Khan, Lone's neighbour.

Lone was the third serving Kashmir

minister killed in the insurgency after the power minister in 2000 and the home minister in 2003. Rebels have killed about a dozen former ministers and lawmakers.

Police said the second attacker escaped after leaving behind his weapon.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh condemned the killing as "dastardly".

"The prime minister condemned the dastardly attack and said efforts to hamper earthquake relief work and disturb peace in the state will be thwarted," Singh's spokesman Sanjaya Baru said in New Delhi.

Pakistan also condemned the attack.

"The government of Pakistan is against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations," the Pakistani foreign ministry said in a statement in Islamabad.

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When agony ends in death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 13-year-old girl, who was first raped and set on fire three days later, succumbed to her burn injuries in the early hours of October 16 in Dhamrai after suffering nine and a half months of tremendous pain.

Meanwhile, the criminals are still at large. They offered the poor father of the girl Tk 5 lakh and then threatened him to withdraw the

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Prayer Timing

October 19

	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-38	4-44
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-33	5-48
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

Sehri-Iftar			
Ramadan	Oct	Sehri	Iftar
14	19	5-33	
15	20	4-38	5-32