

Repair faults at plants for uninterrupted power supply

State minister tells Ctg PDB officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

State Minister for Power Iqbal Hasan Mahmud yesterday asked the Power Development Board (PDB) engineers to find out and repair the faults at the power plants in Chittagong to ensure uninterrupted power supply in the next summer.

He also slammed the engineers for their negligence in properly maintaining the power plants, which are causing much suffering to the residents of Chittagong.

"Check your plants thoroughly this winter and diagnose the problems to make sure that there will be no interruption of power supply in summer," the minister said, referring to the repeated shutdown of two 210-megawatt Raozan plants, Shikalbaha plant and Kaptai Hydroelectric Plant due to technical glitches.

Iqbal Hasan said, "I don't want to see any trouble in any power plant in Chittagong nor do I want to see any news of power tripping appearing in newspapers. Money will not be a problem, but I want uninterrupted power supply in the summer. If necessary, take more time to repair the faults or submit plans. I will give money."

The shortage of capital investment is a major setback for maintaining a balance between transmission and distribution of power, he said while exchanging views with the journalists at the PDB rest house



State Minister for Power Iqbal Hasan Mahmud exchanges views with the journalists at the PDB rest house in Chittagong yesterday.

here. As the power sector is capital-intensive, at least two billion US dollars is needed to run the plants smoothly and to achieve a balance between demand and supply before 2007, he added.

Terming the Raozan and Shikalbaha plants the backbone of Chittagong, the state minister directed the PDB engineers to keep the plants functional at any cost. Replying to a query, he said the system loss in the power sector has been reduced to 24 percent from 30 percent during the four-year rule of the BNP-led coalition government.

means a loss of Tk 50 crore. So, in a way, we can say that we are saving a lot of money," he added. He also assured that there would be no increase in the power tariff. Managing Director of Power Grid Company of Bangladesh Md Ridwan, Chief Engineer of PDB Chittagong region Kazi Bashiruddin Ahmad, Raozan Plant Chief Engineer Paritosh Biswas, Kaptai Plant Manager M Shafiqul Islam and Greater Chittagong Power Distribution (3rd phase) Project Director Aminul Islam also spoke at the meeting.

I am burdened with cases: Ershad

BDNEWS, Satkhira

Jatiya Party Chairman Hussain Muhammad Ershad said the judiciary of the country is now passing through a critical juncture.

He said this while exchanging views with the local journalists at the Satkhira Circuit House yesterday. "I am now burdened with cases due to the direct government control over the judiciary," he said, adding, "Khaleda Zia behaved with me inhumanly."

Jamaat is now more powerful than ever before both economically and organisationally, he said, adding that it has gained its power by being the part of the alliance government. If the situation continues to go on then Jamaat will form government alone in 10 years, he observed.

'Include PRRP staffs in revenue budget'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Palli Poverty Reduction Programme Samannaya Parishad (PPRSP) at a rally in the city yesterday appealed to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to include Palli Poverty Reduction Programme (PPRP) in revenue budget along with its staff.

They also urged the prime minister to implement the national pay scale 2005 for them. PPRSP leaders will submit a memorandum today to the PM to realise their demands. Besides, they will hold press conference, token hunger strike and other programmes.

Addressing the rally PPRSP President Muhammad Mueen Uddin said PPRP the only credit-giving project of the government, has been performing on government fund since 1993 under annual development programme. A meeting of the Executive

Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) in April 18, 2004 suggested that PPRP be included under revenue budget from July 1, 2005 but an inter-ministerial meeting of establishment ministry in October 12 this year decided not to include the PPRP under revenue budget showing that it was a project before 1997. As a result, finance ministry denied giving block allocation for PPRP project and that's why about 1339 officials and its staff are in uncertainty about their jobs. Mueen also said Tk 133.12 crore has been distributed among 10 lakh people as credit under the project and now if the project comes to an end, the government and the beneficiaries will suffer a huge loss. PPRSP General Secretary Jahurul Islam, Organising Secretary Moinul Islam and districts and thana level leaders also spoke at the rally.

Khaleda to lay foundation of Dhaleswari Bridge tomorrow

BDNEWS, Tangail

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will visit Nagarpur of Tangail tomorrow to lay foundation of the bridge to be built over the river Dhaleswari.

Roads and Highways Department will construct the bridge at a cost of Tk 48.48 crore.

Khaleda will lay foundation of the bridge at 2:00pm in Tangail.

She will also inaugurate the sub-station of Palli Bidyut, construction work of the Tangail-Aricha highway and the newly built academic building of Nagarpur Jadunath Pilot High School and two-day-long programme on centenary of the school.

She will address a rally organised by the local BNP at the Nagarpur government college field.

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda, Education Minister Dr M Osman Farruk and Jute and Textiles Minister Shajahan Siraj will be present.

Advocate Gautam Chakraborty, local lawmaker and state minister for water resources, will deliver the address of welcome at the rally.

Food inspectors begin strike today

BDNEWS, Chittagong

Inspectors of the Food Department across the country go for a three-day work abstention from today to press for their 14-point demands.

The decision to go for the strike was taken at the Chittagong divisional conference of the Food Inspectors Association held at Dewanhat central silo premises on Saturday.

President and Secretary General of the association's central committee Ali Hasan and Sayed Mustaque Ahmed addressed the conference and urged the government to meet their demands.

They said they will come to the office as usual, but refrain from working up to 12am from today to Wednesday.

They also threatened to go for tougher movement in future to realise their demands.

The demands include elevation of the food inspectors to second-class gazetted officer status and enhancement of the scale of the sub-inspectors of food.

400 mobile sets, cash stolen from mobile centre in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Around 400 mobile phone sets and Tk 20 thousand were stolen from a mobile training and service centre at a shopping mall here in the port city yesterday.

According to sources, some burglars entered Mobile Zone Dot Com on the first floor of Central Plaza at GEC Intersection area some time in the early hours of yesterday,

breaking the opening for exhaust fan. They took away around 400 cellular sets including those of valuable models such as Nokia 7650, 7610, 6600 and Samsang B 1200 stored there for servicing and Tk 20 thousand in cash, they said.

Proprietor of the service centre Sudarshan Dash told newsman that they closed the centre at 10:30pm on the previous night and opened it again at 9:30am yesterday only to find the showcases and drawers open with the valuable mobile sets and money gone.

The exhaust fan was lying on the floor, which indicates that the thieves entered through the opening, he said.

Bangla Vision kicks off test transmission

BSS, Dhaka

Bangla Vision, a new satellite television channel in private Sector, begins its test operations at 6:00pm yesterday.

Shyamol Bangla Media Ltd, the operator of Bangla Vision, promised to present objective news with a professional outlook and healthy entertainment programme for audience of all ages.

Operators sources said the Bangla Vision would help uphold the independence of the media and ensure the people's right to information.



Singer Ayub Bachchu performs at a function at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex in the city yesterday, organised by Chittagong Samity, Dhaka.

Saifur doubts if AL to get more than 38 seats in next polls

UNB, Moulvibazar

Finance and Planning Minister Saifur Rahman yesterday doubted whether Awami League would be able to get more than 38 seats in the next general election if the government could complete the rest of the development work it has undertaken.

"If we finish all our development work in next one year, I doubt whether the AL would get over 38 seats in the next election, not to speak of 58 seats," he said, lashing at the main opposition party for its stand what he said "against the country and its development."

He was addressing as chief guest the inaugural ceremony of Dholaai and Chatla bridges in the district.

Deputy commissioner M Yunusur Rahman presided over the function. Son of Finance Minister M Naser Rahman MP, Municipality Chairman Fazlul Karim Mayun and additional chief engineer of Roads and

Highways Department Shahidul Alam also spoke.

He called AL and its chief road-blocks to development and said they became "puzzled due to the various development work of the present four-party alliance government."

"They (AL) are now engaged in conspiracy against the government sensing that they won't come to power in the next election," he said, alleging that the AL is damaging image of the country abroad.

Turning to the menace of militancy, he urged the people to resist the bombers all together from grassroots level. "Due to effective and stern action, the government succeeded in containing them to some extent."

Earlier, he inaugurated Dholaai Bridge and Chatla Bridge.

Supply fertilisers at subsidised prices

LDF urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Left Democratic Front (LDF) yesterday called on the government to supply adequate fertilisers to genuine farmers at subsidised prices immediately.

The ruling alliance must take the responsibility for the fertiliser crisis resulting from the conflict between the government and the fertiliser dealers, said the leaders at a meeting at the office of the Sramik-Krishak Samajbadi Dal in the city.

Ruhin Hossain Prince, Shah Alam, Nurul Hasan, Azharul Islam Hossain, Harun Chowdhury, Zakir Hossain and Kartik Chakraborty spoke at the meeting, presided over by Comrade Nirmal Sen.

The leaders said the fertiliser

crisis is not only a move to destroy the agricultural sector with an aim to plunder money through import of agricultural produce.

They also strongly criticised the government for failing to curb militancy.

The leaders called on the progressive and patriotic people to forge a united movement to root out the militants, topple the alliance government and resist the intervention of the World Bank and IMF.

The party will stage a demonstration in Dhaka on December 29 demanding immediate steps to resolve the fertiliser crisis.

It will also hold anti-imperialist rallies across the country on January 1, the Shaheed Matiul-Kader Day.

DHAKA TODAY Conference Bangladesh Legal Aids and Services Trust organises a regional conference on 'Cross Border Migration and Protection of Human Rights among the Neighbours in South Asia' with Amnesty International General Secretary Irin Khan as keynote speaker. Venue: UTC Bhaban, Karwan Bazar. Time: 4:30pm. Musical session Banshuria, a centre for folk song research and practice, will hold a discussion and a musical session. Venue: Bishwa Sahitya Kendra. Time: 5:00pm. Photo presentation Iranian photographer Abbas, a member of Magnum Photos, will present his photos titled 'Iran Diary 1971-2005'. Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, Dhanmondi. Time: 5:45pm. Teachers' rally Association of Non-government Primary Teachers, Bangladesh will hold a rally demanding nationalisation of their jobs. Venue: Central Shaheed Minar. Time: 3:00pm. Photo exhibition The inaugural ceremony of a 3-day photo exhibition titled 'Right to Fly' will be held with Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed as chief guest. The exhibition will show the exquisite pictures of Bangladesh birds taken by Dr Reza Khan, a biologist and zoo management expert. Venue: Bangladesh Photo Journalist Association, Purana Paltan. Venue: 5:00pm.

Mejban held in festive mood

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The Chittagong festival 2005 and traditional Mejban organised by the Chittagong Samity, Dhaka was held in the city yesterday in a festive mood amid tight security.

About 30 thousand Chittagonians living in the capital, gathered at the Dhanmondi Women Sports Complex to celebrate the annual get-together and joined lunch served with special beef menu.

The port city's famous chef Abul Miah prepared the dishes with his 45 aides. Organisers claimed that 140 cows and 14 goats were slaughtered to entertain the guests.

As a part of the festival, four eminent personalities of Chittagong were awarded the Chittagong Samity Medal-2006 for their contribution in the respective fields.

They are Prof Ashab Uddin Ahmed (posthumously) for his contribution in social work, Dr Jafullah Chowdhury for healthcare, popular actress Kobori Sarwar for acting and Prof Abdul Karim as a historian.

The stage turned to a common platform for both the ruling party and the opposition politicians hailing from Chittagong at the discussion session.

Fisheries and Livestock minister Abdullah-Al-Noman, convener of the Chittagong district unit of Muktiyoddha Sangsad and former president of the Samity Engineer Afsaruddin, left leaning politicians Moinuddin Khan Badal of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal and Dilip Barua of Sammyabadi Dal sat together on the same stage.

The stage turned to a common platform for both the ruling party and the opposition politicians hailing from Chittagong at the discussion session.

All the speakers and the moderator delivered their speeches in the Chittagong colloquial that often seemed Greek to the non-Chittagonians guests. But all the audiences under the huge tarpaulin enjoyed the exceptional speeches where the usually antagonist sides were common in saying about the interest of Chittagong, their beloved birthplace.

"If the bridge on the Karnaphuli is not built before the next elections I will not compete," Noman said adding that the interest of Chittagong should be upheld irrespective of party affiliations or difference of views.

JSD leader Badal's speech full of humour and wit was highly appreciated by the audience.

The programme began at 9:00am and ended in the afternoon after musical performances by eminent artists from the port city followed by a raffle draw.

Ayub Bachchu, Nakib Khan and other band stars rendered songs while popular model Nobel conducted the cultural function.

Different organisations set stalls and display booths with their commodities at the WSC premises. A Citecell banner 'Mejban-o moji jaan' (Enjoy our hospitality), drew attention of all.

The election to the Samity Executive Committee will be held on December 30.

BSF kidnaps Bangladeshi

UNB, Sherpur

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) kidnapped a Bangladeshi from Jhenjigati frontier area on Saturday evening.

Witnesses said a patrol team from BSF Naksi Camp kidnapped Souren Koch, 45, of Halchati village from the zero point between pillar No. 1105 and 1106 when he was crossing the area to go to nearby hill to collect wood.

The Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) sent a letter asking the BSF to release Souren immediately but did not receive any response from them.

Man chopped to death in Keraniganj

BDNEWS, Keraniganj

A man was chopped to death at Emar Gaon village in Keraniganj yesterday.

The victim was identified as Mohor Chan, 35, son of Bashir Chan of Luter Char.

Police arrested Rafiq, allegedly a notorious robber of the area, in this connection.

According to locals and police sources, the incident took place following a land dispute.

The body was sent to the Mitford Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Bazlur new president of Uttara Club

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Bazlur Rahim has been elected president of Uttara Club defeating his contender Fazlul Haq. The election to 11-member executive committee of the club was held yesterday amidst enthusiasm.

Huge Indian medicine seized

BSS, Rajshahi

Members of Rab-5 seized huge quantity of Indian medicines along with 65 bottles of phensedyl and 100 liters of liquor from a passenger train at Gopalpur railway station under Lalpur upazila of Natore district on Saturday night, Rab sources said.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of the elite force conducted a sudden raid in a Sirajganj-bound train from Chapainawabganj and seized 35 thousand tablets of Nime and Citram brands, 3,200 capsules of Omac brand and 93 amples of injection of Tidigesic brand of Indian medicine from a compartment.

The Rab team also seized 65 bottles of phensedyl and 100 liters of country-made liquor after searching another compartment.

WEATHER TODAY Dry weather likely UNB, Dhaka Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours till 6:00pm today. Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during early morning, Met Office said, predicting night temperature may fall by 1-2 degree Celsius. Highest temperature 29.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 11.6 degree Celsius at Srirnongal. The sun sets in the capital at 5:19pm today and rises at 6:40am tomorrow. Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were: City/Town Temperature in Celsius Humidity in percentage Max Min Morning Evening Dhaka 27.2 16.5 63 58 Chittagong 28.9 18.8 65 69 Rajshahi 24.0 15.0 79 63 Khulna 26.4 15.2 75 72 Barisa 27.0 14.6 82 80 Sylhet 29.5 15.4 60 57 Cox's Bazar 28.5 21.8 81 71