

Second unit at Raozan power station trips

BDNEWS, Chittagong

The second unit at Raozan Thermal Power Station remained closed from Thursday night, worsening the power crisis across the country. The unit-2 that was generating 90 MW electricity suddenly tripped at about 10:40pm. Although the authorities termed it a routine shutdown and said that the unit will resume generation within three days, experts apprehended a long-standing closure of the unit. When asked, the Acting Chief Engineer of the station M Jafrullah Khan said, "It is a routine shutdown permitted by the PDB."

Butt sources at the station, preferring anonymity, said that the shutdown was a sudden incident resulted from a month-old trouble in the unit.

The port city is facing a severe power crisis, as it is getting only 181 MW against a minimum demand for around 550 MW.

Bangladesh elected member of UN Peace-Building Commission

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh has been elected a member of the newly established Peace-Building Commission at the United Nations, set up as a result of a decision reached by the world leaders in New York in September. The 31-member body would fill up a gap in the UN system, where there was no institutional mechanism as yet to oversee the transition from peace-keeping to sustainable development in post-conflict societies, what this body is mandated to do, said a message received here yesterday.

Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, ambassador and permanent representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, while speaking to the media described the election of Bangladesh as yet another resounding recognition of the country by the international community.

Robbery at night coach in Jhenidah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

A gang of robbers looted cash and valuables worth over Tk 1 lakh from the passengers of a night coach after stabbing the driver and two passengers in Jhenidah on Thursday night. Sources said the robbers travelling in the guise of passengers first stabbed driver Monoranjan Dey and took control of the Benapole-bound coach when it was crossing Jhenidah. The bus of the Pacific Paribahan was coming from Mymensingh. The gang also stabbed passengers Shafique and Liton and decamped with the booty when the bus reached Kaliganj Bazar. The injured were admitted to Jessore 250-bed Hospital.

2 drug peddlers held in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Detective police arrested two drug peddlers from Banargati area under Sonadanga yesterday. They were identified as Babu and Mizan. Two grams of heroin were recovered from them.

DRU accords reception to 17 members

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) accorded a reception to its 17 senior members on the occasion of the 11th founding anniversary of the organisation. They were given crests at the reception held at the DRU auditorium yesterday, with M Shafiqul Karim in the chair. The 17 members are Shafiqul Kabir, Syed Kamaluddin, Tozammel Ali, Golam Tahaboor, Akram Hossain Khan, Abdul Hamid, Nuruddin Bhuyian, Shamsuddin Ahmed, M Basir Ahmed, Ahmed Nur-e-Alam, Humayun Kabir Chowdhury, Muhammed Minhazur Rahman, Gias Uddin Ahmed Majumdar, Sheikh Raquibuddin, Aminul Haider Chowdhury, Hasan Shahriar and Zainul Abedin. DRU General Secretary Shahed Chowdhury conducted the programme, which was addressed by Shamokul Editor Abed Khan, Hassan Shahriar, Syed Kamaluddin, Abdul Awal Thakur, Mohiul Islam Raju and Monir Hossain.

Road accidents claim nine lives

STAR REPORT

At least nine people were killed in separate road accidents in four districts yesterday and on Thursday night. Our correspondent in Sirajganj reports: Three people were killed and eight others injured in a collision between a coach and a tempo on Hatikumrul-Bonpara highway at Ramarchar in Ullapara yesterday. Two of the dead are Lalu Mia, 35, of Boaliarchar Uttarpara village and Rekha Khatun, 25, wife of Bablu Mia of Amsara village. The other dead could not be identified immediately. Police and witnesses said a Rajshahi-bound coach of Hanif Paribahan collided head-on with a tempo at around 3:30pm, leaving two tempo passengers dead. Another passenger died on way to hospital. The injured were taken to Ullapara and Tarash health complexes and Sirajganj General

Hospital. Our correspondent in Jessore adds: Three people, including a schoolteacher, were killed in a road accident near Rajganj Bazar in Monirampur upazila on Thursday night. The victims are Sohrab Hossain, 35, assistant teacher of Moshim Nagar Secondary School, Nobir Hossain Nabu, 36, owner of Sathi Bakery, and Jalaluddin of Chandipur village. Police and eyewitnesses said the three riding on a motorcycle were going to Monirampur from Rajganj Bazar in the evening. When they reached Juranpur intersection, a speeding truck rammed the motorcycle. Two of them died on the spot while Jalaluddin succumbed to his injuries at Monirampur upazila health complex. BDNEWS adds: Two persons, including a madrasa student, were killed in separate road accidents on Dhaka-Aricha highway in Savar. Habibullah, 23, a student of Jamia Rahmania Arabia Madrasa at Mohammadpur, Dhaka, was killed when a speeding truck rammed his motorcycle near Savar Radio Colony yesterday morning, police sources said. In another accident, a speeding truck hit a rickshaw, in front of Rangaban Nursery near Savar Bazar, killing its passenger. The identity of the victim could not be known immediately. Both the bodies were sent to hospital morgue. BSS adds: One person was killed in a road accident at Barobazar Fulbari gate on Jhenidah-Khulna highway in Kaliganj, Jhenidah, yesterday morning. Police sources said the victim, Narad Das, 40, of Fulbari village was crossing the road when a Jessore-bound bus ran over him. The police seized the bus, but the driver managed to escape.

'Form regulatory body to monitor RMG sector'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nagarik Sangati, a citizens' group, urged the government to form separate regulatory commission comprising representatives of the government, owners, workers and civil society for monitoring the garment sector. Expressing concern over violent events at garments factories, the group also urged the government to implement the High Court order regarding protection of the rights of

the garments workers. The leaders placed four-point demands for permanent solution to the problems prevailing in garment sector at a sit-in programme in front of the Institute of Fine Arts on Dhaka University campus yesterday. They blamed the four-party alliance government for its failure to take prompt steps to redress the genuine grievances of workers. Economist Abu Ahmed said there is no security for 25 lakh workers at their workplace, as most factory buildings were not constructed properly. "There should be a regulatory body which will act as watchdog in the garments sector as the country's economy is now dependent on garments sector," he said. ASM Atiqur Rahman presided over the programme where Advocate Abed Raja, Prof Khandakar Mokaddem Hossain and Subrata Das Khokon also spoke.

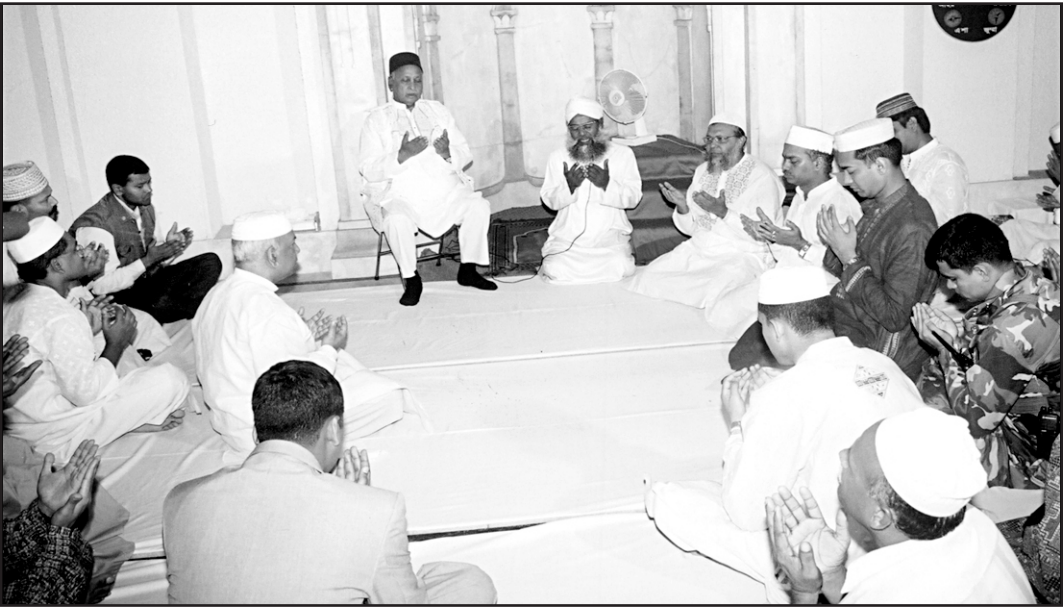


PHOTO: PID

Acting President Jamiruddin Sircar and others pray for early recovery of President Iajuddin Ahmed at a doa mahfil at Bangabhaban Jame Mosque in the city after Juma prayers yesterday.

Minister suggests one-stop service at Mongla Port

UNB, Khulna

Shipping Minister Lt. Col. (retd.) Akbar Hossain yesterday suggested introduction of one-stop service at Mongla Port to ensure transparency and accountability in its service. The minister, addressing a meeting of workers at the port, asked the members of the Maritime Council, including officials and employees of the port, to work

together for smooth export and import activities. In this era of free economy, he said, owners and workers must work together to survive. The meeting was also addressed by Mongla Port Authority chairman Abu Taher, Khulna Chamber of Commerce (KCC) president Shaharuzzaman Murtaza, CBA president Muktar Hossain Khandakar, general secretary Abdur Razzak Malik and Mongla

Port Sramik Sangha general secretary Shahabuddin Ahmed. Earlier, the minister attended the first meeting of the Mongla Port Maritime Council as its chairman. The meeting was attended by Shipping Secretary M Rafiqul Islam, Khulna Divisional Commissioner M Abdul Malekm and Deputy Secretary of Commerce Ministry M Ibrahim Khalil, according to a PID hand-out.

Transport strike on Dhaka-Sylhet highway begins

UNB, Habiganj

An indefinite transport strike called by transport owners and workers began here yesterday, causing immense sufferings to thousands of travellers. Bus communication between Sylhet division and other parts of the country, including capital Dhaka, remained cut off as all buses and minibuses went off Dhaka-Sylhet highway in response to the strike. Habiganj Bus Owners' Association enforced the strike as the problems arising out of transporting passengers through Habiganj-Sylhet route were not solved within their given time. Transport workers put up barricades and staged demonstration on roads in Sayedpur and Madhabpur areas, and damaged a truck at Shayestaganj. Sylhet Bus Owners' Association also extended its support to the strike. Meanwhile, talks between the striking owners and district and police administrations ended inconclusively.



PHOTO: STAR

Amra Faridpurbasi, a forum of residents of Faridpur, forms a human chain in front of the High Court in the city yesterday demanding steps to protect Faridpur from erosion by the Padma river.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Academics reject UGC plan, terming it 'anti-poor'

DU CORRESPONDENT

Academics at a roundtable yesterday rejected '20-year-long Strategic Plan for Higher Education in Bangladesh: 2006-2026' prepared by University Grants Commission (UGC) in a bid to reform country's higher education. Terming the UGC plan 'anti-poor and anti-people', they called for preparing a counter strategic plan on the same issue and said the UGC plan, backed by BNP-Jamaat-led coalition government, would encourage commercialisation of higher education. The academics expressed their grave concern, saying that if the UGC plan is introduced, poor and middle-class students would not get access to higher education, deepening the crisis in higher education system. The roundtable on 'Strategic Plan of UGC: Review and what to be done' was organised by Samaitantrik Chhatra Front (SCF), a left-leaning student body, at the National Press Club in the city. Recently the UGC, country's lone university watchdog, submitted the strategic plan to the President and the Prime Minister

who directed the authorities concerned on April 10 to implement the plan without placing it at parliament for general discussion. Taking part in the roundtable, Shikkha Andolon Mancho President Prof Ajoy Roy said it is an unrealistic idea that the government can reduce its expenditure on public universities from 90 percent to 70 percent if the public universities raise their internal funds. He said the government's bid to raise internal funds of public universities by increasing tuition fees, renting out their establishments, providing consultancy services and introducing evening courses for different professional degrees would only hamper education and research. About the UGC plan's recommendation on the appointment of vice-chancellors (VCs), he said it would increase politicisation of VCs' appointment and subsequently all other appointments intensifying the prevailing undemocratic situation at public universities. Economist Prof Anu Mohammad said some unscrupulous consultants of public universities, who are often seen at different

ministries, persuade the government to introduce different anti-people schemes taking money from World Bank (WB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB). He said the WB, which provided technical and financial cooperation to the UGC and the government for the plan, wants commercialisation of higher education. "We should come up with our own plan to develop our education and research," he added. Former Rajshahi University VC Prof Khan Sarwar Morshed, former Jahangirnagar University VC Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, Dhaka University Teachers' Association General Secretary Prof Mohammad Akhtaruzzaman, RU teacher Prof Shahidul Islam, Dhaka University teachers Prof Akmal Hossain and Prof HK Arefin, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology teacher Prof Shamsul Wares, Economist Prof Amir Hossain and Journalist Shahin Reza Noor also spoke on the occasion. SCF DU unit President Janardan Datta Nantu read out a keynote paper at the roundtable moderated by its central committee President Kalequzzaman Lipon.

BHASHANTEK PROJECT NSDL blamed for irregularities in its execution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Federation of Rural and Urban Poor yesterday alleged that North South Property Development Ltd (NSDL) has resorted to corruption and irregular activities in implementing Bhashantek Rehabilitation Project. At a press conference at the National Press Club, federation leaders said in violation of the agreement signed with the government, the NSDL has plundered crores of taka from slum dwellers and lower income people. They called for stopping all sorts of corruption and demolition of slums in the rehabilitation project. Federation leaders also alleged that the NSDL authorities took Tk 100 for forms and Tk 10,000 as advance money from the slum dwellers and Tk 200 for form and Tk 50,000 as advance money from the low-income people. They said the NSDL also gave an advertisement in a daily newspaper on May 17 urging those who collected forms along with other interested buyers to contact them immediately to buy the flats. Terming these activities of the NSDL wrong and illegal, federation leaders urged the government to give exemplary punishment to those who are violating the agreement. Addressing the press conference, Federation President M A Zaman said the NSDL is supposed to construct buildings there for the poor and landless people, and not to sell forms. Abul Hossain, general secretary of the federation, urged the government to include the federation representatives while initiating any policy for them. Presidium members of the federation Engineer Lutfar Rahman, Mohiuddin Ahmed and Abdul Khaleque were present.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Jote takes out a red flag procession in the city yesterday to mark its founding anniversary.

**Roundtable**  
Prothom Alo organises a roundtable discussion on 'Problems in garment industry and a way out'. Venue: Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 2:00pm.

**Discussion**  
Bangladesh Lekhok Shibir will hold a discussion on 'Historiography in Marxism' to mark the 188th birth anniversary of Karl Marx with Comrade Badruddin Umar as keynote speaker. Venue: Shibir office. Time: 6:00pm.

**Exhibition**  
The inaugural ceremony of a digital exhibition titled 'Our people of inspiration' organised by Drik and D.net will be held. Venue: Drik gallery. Time: 4:00pm.

**Talk**  
Asiatic Society of Bangladesh organises a talk on 'Travel writings of early Indian visitors to England' by Prof Syed Manzoorul Islam. Venue: Society seminar room. Time: 4:30pm.

**Reception**  
Nir will accord a reception to Bangladesh Cricket Team for beating world champion Australia in Cardiff. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 11:00am.

**Conference**  
UNESCO-BAFED Researcher Forum will hold its Eighth Educational Research Conference. Venue: IDB Bhaban. Time: 9:45am.

Programmes on 25th death anniversary of Zia

UNB, Dhaka

The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has drawn up 10-day programmes to observe the 25th anniversary of death of President Ziaur Rahman on May 30. Zia was also the founder of BNP. The programmes will begin on May 29 with a discussion on his eventful life at the Natyamancha in the city at 4:00pm. Programmes of the anniversary day include lowering party flag to half-mast and hoisting black flag and khatme Quran at Zia's grave and the party central office. On the day, BNP chairperson and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, along with the party leaders, will place wreaths on Zia's grave and offer prayers. The prime minister will also distribute foods among the poor during a three-day destitute-feeding programme from May 30 at different places in the city. A photo exhibition and screening of a documentary on Zia's life, arranged by Jatiyatabadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangstha, will be held on June 2 and discussions on June 4, 5, and 8. Besides, BNP has taken up a three-day programme at divisional level and two-day programme at district level from May 30.

15 shops gutted in Comilla

BDNEWS, Comilla

At least 15 shops were gutted in a devastating fire at Daudkandi Bazar in Comilla on Thursday night. Fire brigade sources and witnesses said the fire broke out at a drug store and soon engulfed other adjacent shops. Fire fighters extinguished the blaze with the help of local people. Businessmen estimated the loss at Tk 50 lakh.

One injured in gas cylinder blast in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

One person was severely injured in an explosion of ammonia gas cylinder yesterday morning in Lockpur Frozen Fish processing company at Lockpur village under Rupsha upazila of Khulna district. The injured was identified as Humayun Kabir, an officer of Khulna Fire Brigade unit. The explosion took place due to a leak in the ammonia gas pipe, said Badrul Alam, station officer of Khulna Fire Brigade unit. Hundreds of men and women working in the factory moved to safer places out of panic. Firemen brought emission of gas under control after one hour of frantic efforts.

Death anniversary

Today is the second death anniversary of Sukumar Chandra Sen, a senior officer of Sonali Bank, says a press release. On the occasion, religious programmes will be held at his residence at Sirajganj. Relatives, friends, colleagues and well-wishers have been requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.