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BAGHABARI 71MW PLANT Adviser orders urgent steps to resume generation

UNB, Sirajganj

Energy Adviser Tapan Chowdhury yesterday directed the authorities concerned to resume power generation in the 71MW power plant at Baghabari river terminal repairing it on an urgent basis.

He gave the directive while visiting the PDB power plant that went out of order one and a half years ago. The energy adviser also instructed the authorities concerned to ensure uninterrupted power supply so that irrigation is not hampered in the current season.

Eviction drives come to a halt on govt's latest instruction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The eviction drives by different authorities came to a halt following a government directive that asked the authorities concerned to acquire prior approval from committees set up to monitor law and order all over the country.

According to the directive, before any eviction drive in the capital as well as in other metropolitan cities, the authorities would have to acquire permission from

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

2nd blast in two days in Iran

AP, Tehran

No one was injured in a bombing that took place near the site of an explosion that killed 11 members of the elite Revolutionary Guards in southeastern Iran this week, the country's state-run news agency said yesterday.

The official Islamic Republic News Agency said police and insurgents briefly clashed after the explosion at a school in Zahedan late Friday. No one was in the school at the time of the blast.

"The explosion left no casualties or injuries and didn't cause damages," Hasan Ali Nouri, governor of Zahedan, was quoted as saying by IRNA.

Nouri had previously told the semi-official Fars news agency that the blast was a "sound bomb explosion" - a device that creates a loud boom but that usually does not cause casualties.

Friday's blast came just hours after the funeral for the 11 members of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards who were killed in Wednesday's bombing.

A Sunni Muslim militant group called Jundallah, or God's Brigade, had claimed responsibility for the attack.

Malaysian police suggest confining foreign workers

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia's police chief suggested confining foreigners to their work premises and putting them under 24-hour surveillance to prevent crime, reports on Saturday said.

The Inspector-General of Police Musa Hassan said that the move would deter them from getting involved in rising criminal activity, the New Straits Times reported.

"Under the plan, foreign workers, the majority of whom are contract workers, will be placed in their kongs (workers quarters) at (their) work site and their activities monitored by the contractor even after their working hours," Musa was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

He said the workers would have to register with their employers, who are usually building contractors, if they wished to go out during breaks or days off.

"This way, I believe the foreigners will be more afraid to commit crimes as they know the police can locate them," said Musa.

Musa said crimes committed by foreign workers, especially Indonesians, have escalated with about 5,000 criminal acts committed

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Poverty to be put in museum by 2030

Prof Yunus says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

Nobel laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus yesterday said Bangladesh can be the first country to put poverty in the museums by 2030 tapping the huge potential and natural resources it has.

"We've an abundance of natural gas and coal alongside a unique geographical setting. And on top of these, we have a port that offers immense prospects."

"I firmly believe we would be the first one to achieve the envisaged target of sending poverty to the museums by 2030 if we can take advantage of the resources in reserve and build a mega-seaport and an airport," he said addressing

a seminar in the port city yesterday. Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA), Chittagong organised the discussion on "the microcredit of Zobra and a poverty-free world" at the auditorium of Engineers Institute, Chittagong.

"By setting up a mega seaport and an airport we'll be able to turn the country into an international crossroads, and not only the neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bhutan or the eastern states of India but also China would be interested to use the facilities," Dr Yunus observed.

"It would be even more viable economically if the two could be built in close proximity," he said adding, "We must start the work

without delay."

Referring to location of the proposed mega seaport and airport, he said, "We have the exact location. It can be either offshore Maheshkhali or any adjoining site along the Bay of Bengal."

Terming the basic structure of the open market economy incomplete, he observed that incorporation of the concept of social business in it could complement it.

"The social business that Grameen Bank had started with people projects like Grameen-Danone is meant to work for the benefit of the poor and such business should be on no profit, no loss basis," he said elaborating on his point.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

15 killed in suicide blast in Pak court

Judge, 6 lawyers among the victim

REUTERS, Quetta

A judge and six lawyers were among 15 people killed in a suspected suicide bomb attack on a courtroom in the southwestern Pakistani city of Quetta on Saturday, the city's police chief said.

Pakistan is in the midst of a security scare after a spate of suicide attacks that intelligence officials have linked to groups operating from tribal areas, regarded as hotbeds of support for the Taliban and militants linked to al-Qaeda.

The bomb exploded while a court was in session and a senior judge and six lawyers were among those killed, police in the capital of

Baluchistan province said.

At least 25 people were injured and police chief Rahu Khan Brohi told Reuters six of them were in a critical condition.

Police were stopping and questioning drivers of cars and trucks at road blocks set up in Islamabad, and foreign embassies have told their staff to limit their travel in the capital.

Officials were unsure whether Saturday's blast at a lower court in Quetta was carried by the Taliban or by ethnic Baluch militants fighting for greater autonomy.

"Initially we suspect nationalist extremists, as well as Afghan Taliban could be behind the attack," Razak Bugti, a spokesman

for the Baluchistan government, said.

Police found a head amongst the carnage, raising suspicions that the blast could be have caused by a suicide bomber, Rehmat Niazi, the police officer in charge of operations, told Reuters.

The upward force of a blast from a suicide belt typically decapitates the bomber.

"We're looking into the possibility of whether it was a suicide attack," Niazi said.

Television footage from the wrecked courthouse showed people and police walking through pools of blood, collecting belongings. Body parts and torn clothes

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

India to push forward transit issue in Saarc

Says Pranab Mukherjee

UNB, Mumbai

India will push forward the issue of transit facilities in the Saarc region as it prepares to take over the chairmanship of the Saarc, Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee said here yesterday.

"Physical connectivity will open up the channels of communication and transport," he said, inaugurating a two-day second Saarc business leaders conference, which will discuss the issue of connectivity among the member states of the regional forum.

The Saarc Chambers of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) organised the conference in association with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) to help set agenda for the Safta and Saarc meetings.

A 23-member delegation of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), led by its President Mir Nasir Hossain, is attending the conference.

Mukherjee said connectivity implies physical connectivity, economic connectivity and a connectivity of people and ideas, while the provision of transit facilities, access to roads, railways, waterways and increased air connectivity are all elements of physical connectivity.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Channel S MD held in cheating case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday arrested private television Channel S Managing Director (MD) Syed Samadul Haque in a cheating case.

Nasiruddin Sathi of View Media Centre, a maker of television programmes and advertisements, filed the case with Tejgaon Police Station on Thursday against Haque and Meer Noor-us-Shams Shantano, one of the directors of the channel.

According to the plaintiff, they supplied drama serials and telefilms worth Tk 52 lakh to Channel S under a deal. But the accused paid only Tk 13 lakh and refused to pay the rest.

After arresting Haque at noon, Tejgaon police produced him before a metropolitan magistrate's court in the evening.

The court ordered the police to send Haque to jail rejecting his bail petition and also an appeal of the police for remand.

The lawyer of the accused said View Media Centre supplied low quality programmes, which were already telecast on other channels breaching the deal.

Ex-AL lawmaker Golondaz passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Awami League lawmaker Altaf Hossain Golondaz from Mymensingh-10 died last night in the capital.

Golondaz, 57, had a poor heart condition. As his condition deteriorated at the MP Hostel, he was rushed to Birdem Hospital at 10:45pm. But doctors on duty declared him dead on arrival hospital sources said.

He was elected from Gafargaon for the fifth, seventh and eighth parliament.

He left behind his wife, two sons and a daughter.

Ex-minister Sirajul Hossain Khan dies

BSS, Dhaka

Former minister and eminent journalist Sirajul Hossain Khan died of old-age complications at his Gulshan residence yesterday. He was 80.

He left behind two sons, two daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death, family sources said.

Sirajul Hossain, a former lawmaker from Habiganj-2 constituency, was a minister during the Ershad rule.

He was the East Pakistan resident editor of the then Pakistan Times and the founder chief editor of the Eastern News Agency (ENA).

Khan was the general secretary of the then East Pakistan Journalists Union and the general

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



PHOTO STAR

A hawker evicted from footpath sells clothes on a rickshaw-van on Gulshan-Badda Link Road in the capital. The photo was taken yesterday.

BB to ask ministries to detain loan defaulters, confiscate collaterals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) will ask the home and finance ministries to take special initiatives to detain loan defaulters and confiscate their collaterals against the loans.

"It is possible to arrest and punish the loan defaulters by applying the existing laws. But, unfortunately it was found that the law enforcers are not cooperative to the banks in dealing with loan defaulters," BB Governor Salehuddin Ahmed told reporters yesterday.

He said there are instances of issuing arrest warrants against loan defaulters by the court, but little action was taken to implement those orders.

The central bank governor said, "It needs to apply the existing laws strictly and we will raise the issue with the home and finance ministries."

BB sources said its high officials have already discussed the matter

with the two ministries to find ways to punish loan defaulters.

The BB asked the home ministry to ensure active role of the law enforcers in arresting the loan defaulters and at the same time the banks' taking possession of their assets taken as collaterals.

Meanwhile, the joint forces also initiated drives against top loan defaulters and recently collected information about them from the central bank.

Referring to the non-cooperation of police, an Agrani Bank official said the police did not take any initiative to arrest a loan defaulter of his bank despite court warrant of arrest. "The defaulter was on the top 20 loan defaulters' list of the Agrani Bank and one of his cheques was bounced," he said.

An official of National Bank Ltd also said warrants of arrest were issued against a number of defaulters of the bank, but the police did not make any move to arrest them.

"We have informed the Bangladesh Bank about the non-cooperation of the police" even after court order to confiscate the defaulters' collaterals, he said.

"Most of the loan defaulters are very influential in the business and political arenas. So, the law enforcers are afraid of arresting them," said a source, explaining the police's non-cooperation.

Sources said the volume of classified loans has been increasing gradually despite a number of government measures in recent years.

BB sources said the volume of defaulted loans in the banking system was Tk 20,098 crore in December 2006 while the total classified loan is about Tk 31,000 crore with different banks having written off around Tk 11,000 crore in the last few years.

The total number of cases involving Tk 22,954 crore filed with the Money Loan Court was 97,288 as of June 30, 2006.

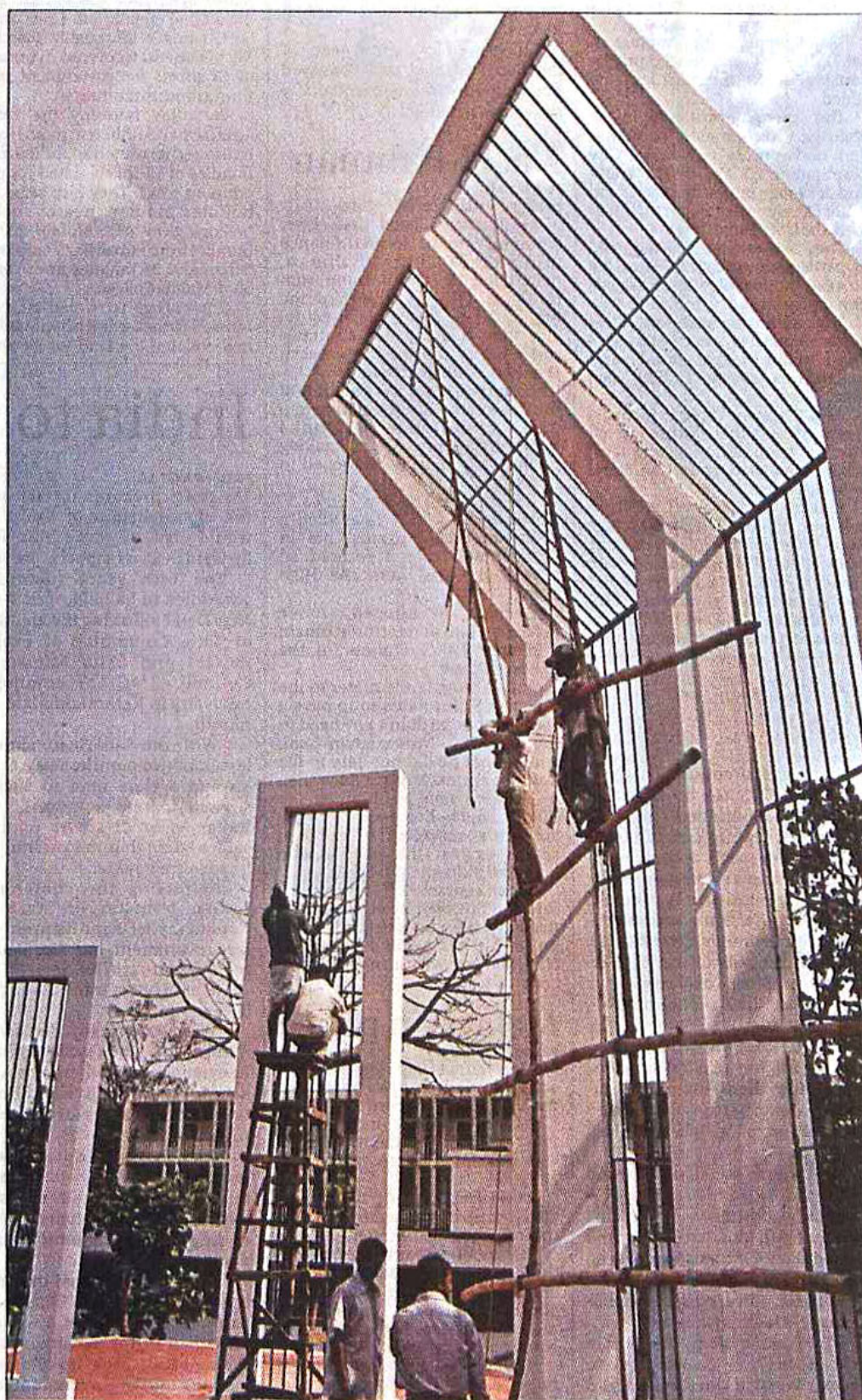


PHOTO STAR

Workers paint the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital as Ekushey February or the International Mother Language Day is only a few days away.

Prayer Timing February 18		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5:25	6:00
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:30	4:45
Maghrib	5:57	6:01
Esha	7:15	7:45
Source: Islamic Foundation		