

Power Cell finalises 6 sponsors for small power plants

UNB, Dhaka

The Power Cell has chosen six bidders out of 18 as responsive for the proposed small power plants (SPP) project...

Under the project, a total of 10 SPPs, each having 10-30 MW capacity, will be set up in the private sector...

According to official sources, the Power Cell, a reform-implementation agency under the Power Ministry, has finally chosen six bidders as responsive to award the SPP projects.

Initially, a total of 32 local firms participated in the pre-qualification process and then 18 of them collected the request for proposal (RFP) and submitted their respective bid documents.

There are allegations that the Power Cell has made half of the bidders non-responsive rejecting their proposals on very silly grounds.

Among the non-responsive bidders, five have questioned the intention of the Power Cell and lodged complaints with the Power Ministry to look into the matter.

Noorpower Power Company Ltd, Prime Energy Ltd, Associates of Dandy Group and ECBL, Hosaf Power and RAK Ceramics are among the complainants.

Receiving the complaints, the

sources said the Power Division in an official note has questioned the wisdom of the Power Cell.

It said these firms have been declared non-responsive because they did not submit some papers like power of attorney, consortium agreement and company board resolution...

The note further advised to give the non-responsive bidders seven days' time to submit the required papers. "If such papers are received as complementary one in the RFP, the tender would be more competitive," the Power Division

observed.

Ignoring this advice, the Power Cell has finalised the list of the responsive bidders and sent it to the Power Ministry for approval.

When contacted, a top official of the Power Cell expressed his ignorance and said, "They have gone to finalise the list of the responsive bidders following the instruction of the Power Division."

"We've fully complied with the Power Division's instruction and there is nothing wrong," some officials said on condition of anonymity.

The six SPPs for which sponsors have been made responsive are 10MW Sirajganj, 20MW Barabkunda, 20MW Feni, 20MW Tangail, 20 MW Narsingdi and 30MW Maona power plants.



Shujon President Prof Muzaffer Ahmad answers questions from the participants at The 27th Election Olympiad 2007 at Fazlul Haq Girls' College at Gandaria in the city yesterday.

Election Olympiad held in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 27th Election Olympiad 2007, a countrywide knowledge-based competition on election and politics, was held at Fazlul Haq Girls College at Gandaria in the city yesterday with a view to creating awareness of election and politics among the youth, says a press release.

Shujon- Shushashoner Janney Nagorik (Citizens for Good Governance) Gandaria Election Olympiad Committee organised the competition with Nazrul Islam, principal of the college, in the chair.

Apart from Fazlul Haq Girls College, a total of 300 higher secondary and graduate students of Central Women's College, KL Jumili School and College, Narinda College and Mahanagar Mahila College took part in the competition.

Ferdous Hasan and Subrata Kumar Roy became champion and runner-up at university level while Anjan Kumar Majumder and Mina Akter Iren became champion and runner-up at college level. They were awarded crests.

Earlier, the Olympiad began with the national anthem in the morning at the College.

Speaking on the occasion as the chief guest, Shujon President Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said it is the 27th Olympiad of Shujon and except two, 25 Olympiads were held in the district levels.

Principal Nazrul Islam said this kind of initiative should be taken to establish good governance in the country.

Shujon Secretary Dr Badiul Alam Majumder, Dr Meher-E-Khoda and Vice Principal of the college Kaniz Mahmuda were also present on the occasion.

Square donates bird flu medicines for 200 patients

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Square Pharmaceuticals donated bird flu medicines to the government which will cover the treatment of some 200 patients.

At a programme at Square Hospitals Ltd in the city on Monday, Chairman of Square Group Samson H Chowdhury handed over the medicines to Health and Family Welfare Affairs Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) Dr Asim Matur Rahman.

Speaking as the chief guest, Matur Rahman said the government is sincerely working on combating bird flu.

He also said it is tough for the government to combat the situation alone and that is why the government wants to involve the non-government development organisations in this regard.

He also thanked Square for assisting the government's bird flu preventive activities.

Agriculture Adviser Dr Chowdhury Sajjadul Karim said Bangladesh is not the lone sufferer. Rather, a number of other countries in the world are also combating bird flu.

He also urged people to work together sincerely to combat the problem.

Samson H Chowdhury said Square has been manufacturing quality and life saving medicines for the last 50 years.

The drugs have been donated as part of its social responsibilities and such initiatives will continue, he added.

Bapa sends memo to Saarc leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), an environmentalist organisation, has sent a memorandum to the Saarc leaders to consider environmental issues to ensure sustainable development in the region.

In the memorandum, Bapa urged Saarc leaders to consider issues of climate change, global warming, settlement of disputes centring international rivers, preservation of shared sensitive eco-systems and promotion of environmental awareness and sustainable development.

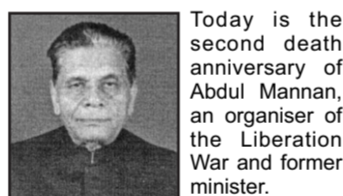
Regarding water issues, Bapa urged India and all Saarc countries to adopt ecological approach that would promote preservation of natural quantum and direction of river flows.

Bapa also suggested Saarc leaders to take into account the experience of African countries that made much advancement in preserving forest and protect their wildlife through joint efforts.

In the memorandum, Bapa urged Saarc leaders to promote interaction and cooperation among the governments, pro-environment civic and non-government organisations, so that a regional consensus on sustainable development can be developed.

Death anniversary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail



Today is the second death anniversary of Abdul Mannan, an organiser of the Liberation War and former minister.

A director of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra, he was a close aide of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

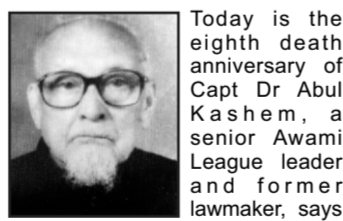
Abdul Mannan was born at Katulee village in Sadar upazila, Tangail, on October 7, 1929.

A presidium member of the Awami League, he passed away at his Elephant Road residence in Dhaka on this day in 2005 due to old-age complications.

To mark the day, Abdul Mannan Smrity Parishad will arrange Qurankhwani and distribute foods among the destitute in Tangail.

A milad mahfil and discussion will also be held at Tangail Shaheed Smrity Poura Uddan.

Capt Dr Abul Kashem



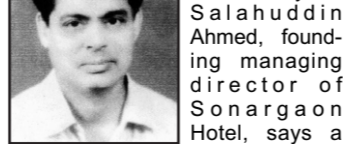
Today is the eighth death anniversary of Capt Dr Abul Kashem, a senior Awami League leader and former lawmaker, says a press release.

He was a close associate of Bangabandhu Shiekh Mujibur Rahman.

A milad mahfil will be held at a mosque adjacent to Katalganj graveyard under Panchlaish thana in Chittagong after Asr prayers today.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the milad.

Salahuddin Ahmed



Today is the 11th death anniversary of Salahuddin Ahmed, founding managing director of Sonargaon Hotel, says a press release.

He was also the project director of Purbani Hotel. On the occasion of his death anniversary, a doa mahfil will be held and foods will be distributed among the destitute.

10 new Japanese volunteers arrive

UNB, Dhaka

Ten new members of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) have arrived in Bangladesh on a two-year assignment to support socio-economic and human resource development activities in the country.

The ten members, who arrived in Dhaka on March 30, met JICA Resident Representative Nobuko Suzuki Kayashima and apprised her about their target activities, said a JICA press release.

Among the 10 members, Akiko Bijajima and Akimi Fuji will work in the field of rural community development at the Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BDRB) in Kalihati upazila of Tangail.

Four others -- Nagaoki Okada, Miyuki Takana, Yuko Mizutani and Mina Sumiya -- will work on infectious disease control at the Civil Surgeon's offices in Thakurgaon, Brahmanbaria, Sylhet and Comilla.

Emi Nagano will be assigned to the field of community development at the Upazila Family Planning office at Mohonardi in Narsingdi district.

Shunichi Takaura will teach karate at Bangladesh Karate Federation, Dhaka stadium, while Ayami Katsumata tennis at Bangladesh Kriya Shiksha Protishthan in Savar.

Shinji Yukawa will be assigned to the field of computer technology at P.A.C.C., Ministry of Establishment.

Call to amend nat'l disability act

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a meeting yesterday underscored the need for amendment to the National Disability Welfare Act, 2001.

They also asked for signing and ratification of the UN Convention on the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities (PWDs) adopted at the UN General Assembly on December 13, 2006 with a view to helping mainstream the issue of the PWDs in the society.

They were speaking at a 'Councilors' Meeting' of National Grassroots Disabled Federation (NGDF) at the Action on Disability and Development (ADD) office in the city.

Speaking on the occasion, NGDF Law and Justice Secretary Ibrahim Hossain stressed the need for amendment to the national disability welfare act 2001 to make it disability-friendly.

He also urged the media to highlight the real picture of PWDs at the grassroots level to sensitise policy makers.

Speakers at the meeting also emphasised implementation of the existing disability welfare act, in particular the clauses of employment opportunity and census on the number of PWDs.

Umme Kulsum Ranjana, president of the National Council of Disabled Women, said there is no

use of formulating policy if it is not implemented.

Basing on her work experience at the grassroots level, Ranjana alleged that many organisations do not properly utilise the fund for the PWDs.

She demanded monitoring of the activities of these organisations and inclusion of PWDs in policy-making committees so that the needs of the PWDs are properly addressed.

ADD Country Representative Mosharrar Hossain asked for adequate budget allocation for implementation of the provisions of disability welfare in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

Speaking as a special guest, National Forum of Organisations Working with the Disabled (NFOWD) Deputy Director Salma Nasrin asked for signing and ratifying the UN Convention of the PWDs soon in order to bring amendment to the existing national act for the PWDs.

NGDF President Akhter Hossain presided over the meeting.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, attended the meeting as chief guest while Anisul Huq, assistant editor of the daily Prothom Alo, was present as special guest.

79 killed by law enforcers in three months

BSF kills 37, says Odhikar report

Staff Correspondent

A total of 79 people were killed by the members of law enforcement agencies in the last three months while another 37 were killed by Border Security Force (BSF) of India, according to a survey report of Odhikar, a human rights organisation.

Housewife found dead in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Police recovered the body of a housewife from a flat in the port city on Monday night.

They also arrested a man in this connection yesterday.

Sources said a team of Bakalia Police Station recovered the body of Priya, 25, wife of one Javed Jahangir, from a flat on the fourth floor of a high-rise building in Kalamia Bazar area at around 10:00pm on Monday.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Bakalia PS Kamrul Islam and two other police staffs of the same station also live in different floors of the building.

Kamrul said Javed might have murdered Priya two or three days ago. Javed and Priya rented the flat around a month ago which had been locked for the last few days, police said.

Police arrested Alamgir, reportedly a brother of Javed, from city's Chandgaon Residential Area yesterday morning.

Obituary

UNB, Goalundo

Eminent lyricist and former deputy director general of Bangladesh Betar Alimuzzaman Chowdhury passed away due to cardiac arrest at a hospital in Dhaka yesterday at the age of 80.

Alimuzzaman, who was also a government college teacher, composed many songs and wrote various books.

Alhaj Raisuddin

BSS, Kishoreganj

Alhaj Raisuddin Bhuiyan, former headmaster of Kishoreganj Haleshar High School and an eminent social worker, died of old-age complications at his residence yesterday morning at the age of 100.

He is survived by his wife, five sons, six daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

His eldest son Alhaj Farhad Ahmed Kanchan is a former law-maker.

The report, launched yesterday in the city, was prepared on the basis of news items published in 11 national dailies and fact-finding reports by Odhikar, says a press release of the organisation.

Among the 79 people, 46 were killed by Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), 18 by the army, five by the joint forces, two by the navy and one by officers of the Department of Narcotics Control from January 1 to March 31, the report claimed.

The report also said 50 people were killed in 'crossfire' in this period and of them, 44 were killed by Rab, five by police and one by the joint forces.

The party affiliations of the people killed are: seven from BNP, four from Awami League, seven from Biplobi Communist Party, one from New Biplobi Communist Party, three from Purbo Banglar Communist Party, four from Purbo Banglar Communist Party (Jano Juddho), four from Purbo Banglar Communist Party (Red Flag), four from Sarboshara Party, three were from Sromojibi Mukti Andolon, two from Gono Muktofouz, three from Ganchil Bahini, one from Haji Bahini and one from the Masim Bahini, the report pointed out.

The professions and distinct identities of the dead are: One freedom fighter, two farmers, one police informer (source), one indigenous leader, two alleged

muggers, 17 alleged criminals, one alleged gambler, one alleged drug peddler, one under trial prisoner of Dhaka Central Jail, one prisoner of Faridpur Jail and one suspected arms dealer, the report also pointed out.

A total of 1,26,968 people were reportedly arrested across the country from January 1 to March 31, the report said.

It also said 33 people were reportedly killed and 1357 injured due to political violence in the last three months.

The report covering human rights situations all over the country also showed that six journalists were injured, eight arrested, nine assaulted and 32 were given threats.

In the last three months, a total of 144 women were reportedly victims of human rights violations owing to rape, acid violence or dowry, the report also added.

Besides, a total of 39 people, including eight children, 23 women and eight men were victims of acid attack across the country, the report said.

Indian BSF allegedly killed 37 Bangladeshis, injured 31, arrested four and abducted 27 from January 1 to March 31, the report pointed out.

Odhikar expressed concern over the arrests made under the Special Powers Act of 1974.

Weather Today section with a graphic logo and a table showing weather forecasts for various cities in Bangladesh, including Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, and Cox's Bazar. The table lists temperature in Celsius and humidity in percentage for morning and evening.



Railway authorities demolish illegal structures along both the sides of the rail tracks at Jurain in the city yesterday.

India to allow zero duty entry to LDCs

FROM PAGE 1 the summit where Afghanistan joined as the eighth member of the regional grouping.

India was elected Saarc chairman on the opening day of the two-day summit.

Touching upon the ongoing process in South Asia Free Trade Agreement (Safra), he said India is ready to accept "asymmetrical" responsibilities by opening its markets to its South Asian neighbours without insisting on reciprocity.

"I am happy to announce today that we will allow zero duty access to India before the end of this year to our South Asian neighbours who are least developed countries and further reduce the sensitive list in respect of these countries," Singh said.

In a bid to realise the dream of full regional connectivity, he said the member countries should commit to actually making the travel freer and easier.

"As an immediate step, India is announcing unilateral liberalisation of visas for students, teachers, professors, journalists and patients from Saarc (countries). Let us aim to double the intra-Saarc flow of tourists in the next five years."

He said South Asia stands at a "moment of opportunity. It was once said that positive expectations have a way to leading to positive outcomes. I believe that the time has come for Saarc to show that this is

so. Let us work together to make it so."

Asserting that South Asia is in the midst of an unprecedented political and economic transformation, the prime minister said, "The political transitions, painful as they may be, are something that each of us has to work out for ourselves, within our countries and between our governments."

"I see signs of hope that our governments are now addressing the bilateral political issues that have prevented us from achieving our potential. We must break with the past and join hands to realise our shared destiny," he said.

Singh said there are also economic vibrancy and social change today in every country in South Asia. Never before has it been truly within their capacity to envisage a future where the people could be free of the twin curses of poverty and disease.

"It is possible today. It is here that Saarc has the real opportunity to realise the goals of our charter to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural developments in the region.

The question before us is whether we will seize the opportunity that beckons. Can we make this association of states touch and improve the lives of our peoples," he said.

Singh said connectivity -- physical, economic and of the mind -- enabling the people to use fully the geographical and resource endowments had historically been the key to the region's peace and prosperity. South Asia has flourished most when connected to itself and the rest of the world, he added.

The prime minister said the popular response for the Saarc rally was a graphic reminder of the potential of connectivity. The study for a regional multi-modal transport system has given the grouping a useful basis to carry this work forward.

Singh said the South Asian grouping should encourage its civil society to interact and develop the habit of cooperative thinking.

"Our agreement to establish a South Asia University, as a world class institution of learning, will be an important symbol of the connectivity of ideas and of our youth that would build the knowledge economy of the future."

Singh said there is an ongoing process of building an open and integrated market from the Himalayas to the Pacific, covering a vast and dynamic economic region and Safra could have a major role to play in this emerging architecture.

He said it is time that Saarc begin to address global issues and to consider how it might do so together. Energy security, food security and climatic change are all issues that

impact South Asia's development strategies and which need focussed attention.

"All of South Asia is now or will soon be short of energy. A South Asian energy community could start by harmonising systems and methods and grid structures and ultimately move on to an energy exchange with energy markets that cover the whole region. Promoting appropriate local technologies for harnessing renewable energy is an area we should consider for future cooperation."

The prime minister said the current summit would be taking the first step towards improving food security by setting up a Regional Food Bank, which would meet shortages and losses caused by natural calamities.

Singh said he had a compelling vision of an "inclusive, plural and rapidly developing" South Asia playing its role in an interdependent world's economic development and peaceful evolution.

"I am therefore particularly happy that this summit should see the high level presence of observers from outside the region."

In the coming years, Saarc will learn to work with our partners from outside the region evolving ways of involving them in our progress," he said.