

FBCCI worried over power, gas line disconnection
Seeks time for industries to set up ETPs
UNB, Dhaka

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) yesterday expressed deep concern over disconnection of electricity and gas lines to many industrial units for not setting up effluent treatment plants (ETPs) and urged the government to allow them some time they need in this regard.

"Setting up of such plants is time-consuming," a meeting of the FBCCI was told.

Representatives from different sectors, including textile, readymade garments and dyeing, were present at the meeting held at the federation bhaban with its first Vice-President Mohammed Ali in the chair.

The meeting, however, welcomed the government decision in this regard and viewed that the entrepreneurs should set up the ETPs in line with the size and production capacity of their respective factories.

The trade body leaders sought long-term bank loans at lower interest rates to help set up ETPs.

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Little cheers for bid to up banks' capital

Overall deficit rises to Tk 1,500cr, mainly contributed by NCBs

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Despite Bangladesh Bank (BB) initiatives to increase banks' capital, overall capital deficit in the sector was Tk 1,500 crore as of December 2006.

According to BB data, capital deficit of the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) was Tk 3,412 crore and that of the specialised banks was Tk 39 crore.

The local private banks and the foreign banks operating in the country, however, as a whole showed a brighter picture with the private banks' capital surplus being Tk 530 crore and that of the foreign banks Tk 1,421 crore.

Of the private banks, the Oriental Bank had a deficit of Tk 663 crore and the Social Investment Bank Tk 27 crore.

As per the existing rules, the banking sector should have a total capital of Tk 13,788 crore but the amount was Tk 12,288 crore, the data of December 2006 shows.

According to the rules, a bank is

bound to keep its minimum capital at either Tk 100 crore or nine percent of its risk-weighted asset-- whichever is higher.

The government has recently initiated moves to increase the banks' minimum capital from Tk 100 crore to Tk 200 crore. The council of advisers has already approved a proposal for the increase and sources said the BB will soon issue a circular in this regard.

Sources said the BB is also planning to increase the amount of any bank's minimum capital from nine percent to 10 or 11 percent of the bank's risk-weighted asset.

But, officials of many private banks are against the central bank's new plan and said such moves will create problems for a few banks.

"General shareholders will be deprived if major part of a bank's profit is diverted as capital or risk-weighted asset," said an official of a private bank, adding that such plan may also affect the stock market when shareholders will not get regular dividends.

A BB official, however, said the new rules for increasing banks' capital will not be a problem. Except for the NCBs, the local and foreign banks are making huge profits, he said, adding, "The banks will have to divert a portion of the profit and this is in the interest of the banks' clients."

Citing official data, he said operating profit of the whole banking sector was Tk 5,623 crore last year, of which the local banks made Tk 3,292 crore and the foreign banks Tk 1,180 crore.

The official said the government will infuse capital to the NCBs under a reform plan.

Another BB high official said there is continuous risk in some banks although the overall situation in the private banking sector is well. He identified lack of corporate governance, insider lending, and fictitious and classified loans as the major factors that have turned a few banks into "problem banks".

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New air chief takes over

UNB, Dhaka

Air Commodore Shah M Ziaur Rahman took over as the new Chief of the Air Staff yesterday replacing Air Vice Marshal Fakhru Azam.

A handing-taking over ceremony was held at the Air Headquarters in the afternoon, said an ISPR release.

The new air chief formally took over the command of Bangladesh Air Force from outgoing Chief of the Air Staff Air Vice Marshal Fakhru Azam by signing the handing-taking over book.

Principal staff officers of the Air Headquarters were present on the occasion.

In the morning, the outgoing air chief placed wreaths at the Shikha Anirban and paid homage to the Armed Forces members who were martyred during the War of Liberation in 1971. He also signed the visitor's book there.

Later, a smart BAF contingent presented him a guard of honour at the Air Headquarters. He inspected the guard and took salute. He also placed a sapling on the Air Headquarters premises.

Barapukuria coalmine goes to full production from Apr 17

UNB, Dhaka

Barapukuria coal mine is likely to go into full-swing production from April 17 with a daily output increased to 1500 metric tons from 1000mt.

According to reports received in Dhaka, Energy and Power Adviser Tapan Chowdhury, accompanied by the army-led taskforce chief, visited the mine and the adjoining power plant yesterday.

He asked the officials to take "all

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FORCED RETURN 11 job seekers sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent 11 Bangladeshi job seekers, who were forced to return home from Dubai Airport in the United Arab Emirates on Friday, to Dhaka Central Jail after immigration police at Zia International Airport (ZIA) produced them before the court filing a case against them.

The case was filed with Zia International Airport Police Station against the 11 people in connection with travelling with forged passports and documents.

Immigration police told The Daily Star last evening that the Special Branch (SB) of police would investigate the case.

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PHOTO: STAR

A water body in Uttar Mughda in the capital has turned into a garbage dumping spot aiding mosquitoes to breed abundantly.

Developing nations not ready to take full advantage of biotech

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and other developing nations are not prepared enough to take full advantage of biotechnology, application of which is going to bring radical changes in human societies in near future.

The developing countries are not even ready to face the challenges ahead.

The observations were made on the second day of a three-day seminar yesterday on 'Promotion of Biotechnology in Bangladesh: National and International

Perspective'. Ministry of Science and ICT, Dhaka University, Brac University, Bangladesh Academy of Sciences, ICDDR,B, Incepta and Square Pharmaceuticals organised the seminar, attended by scientists and experts at home and abroad.

Increasing use of biotechnology would help face the challenges in the fields of agriculture, health and livestock in the developing countries like Bangladesh where population growth is high, but production is far behind, experts noted.

Therefore, if these nations do

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2 'arms traders' killed in 'shootout'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, C'nawabganj

Two alleged arms traders were killed in an encounter with Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila last night.

They were identified as Sajjad and Toufiq of Rashknagar village under Shibganj upazila of the district.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-5 raided a mango orchard at Lalapara under Moharajpur Union of Sadar upazila at around 8:00pm where a gang of arms traders was holding a meeting.

Sensing the presence of the Rab

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17 suspected militants held in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Police arrested 17 activists of Islamist outfit Allahar Dal at Malibari village under Gaibandha Sadar upazila yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, the law enforcers from Gaibandha Sadar Police Station raided the house of Abu Bakker Siddique where the activists of the Islamist party were holding a "secret" meeting.

The arrestees are Nizam Uddin, Ferdous, Rafiqul Islam, Jahangir Alam, Abu Bakker Siddique, Zahurul Islam, Sadequr Rahman, Mozahar Ali, Taslim Uddin, Laltu Mia, Anwarul Islam, Jahurul Alam, Salimuddin, Osman, Raju Mia,

Nizamuddin and Tofazzal.

Police said nine of the arrestees hail from Sunderganj upazila, while the rest from Gaibandha Sadar upazila.

Locals said the Allahar Dal activists used to hold meetings at the house on Saturdays for two hours from 7:00am to 9:00am with its leader Nizamuddin in the chair.

Nizamuddin told police that they carried out their activities in Dhaperhat under Sadullapur upazila for a few months. After being driven out from Dhaperhat by the locals, they took shelter at Malibari village.

Police produced the arrested Allahar Dal activists before the court that sent them to jail.

14 killed as jeep with explosives goes off in south India

AFP, Chennai

At least 14 people were killed and 17 injured in southern India when a vehicle carrying explosives blew up, police said.

"The jeep was carrying gelatine sticks. Fourteen people were killed and 17 were injured. Two of them are in a critical condition," K. Radhakrishnan, inspector general of police told AFP.

The blast occurred at Chendur village some 130 kilometers from Chennai, capital of Tamil Nadu state.

Most of the victims were villagers who had gathered near the car

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Israel launches air strike against Gaza militants

AFP, Gaza City

Israel launched an air strike against suspected Gaza militants on yesterday, killing one and wounding two, as it made good on threats to get tough over persistent rocket fire from the territory.

Israeli fire also wounded a Palestinian militant commander on its most wanted list in the West Bank town of Jenin in what the militant group called a deliberate assassination attempt.

Palestinian medics named the

militant killed in the Gaza raid as Fuad Maaruf, 22, an activist of the leftist Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

The DFPL said Maaruf was killed by missiles from an Israeli helicopter as he was taking part in an "extended ambush" of Israeli troops operating inside the Gaza Strip alongside militants of the ultra-hardline Islamic Jihad group.

Witnesses said the helicopters opened fire on an area east of the Jabaliya refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip while several Israeli

tanks advanced a few metres (yards) into the territory.

The Israeli military confirmed the air raid but denied any ground incursion.

"The helicopters opened fire after suspect movements near the security barrier (between Israel and the Gaza Strip) to the east of Jabaliya," an army spokesman said. "Some armed men were preparing to plant a bomb near the security barrier."

Egyptian Foreign Minister

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2 missing French 'kidnapped' in Afghanistan

AFP, Kabul

Two French aid workers who went missing this week in Afghanistan have been kidnapped by Taliban militants and taken to volatile Helmand province, an official and police chief said yesterday.

An Afghan colleague who was travelling with the French workers may have been involved in the abduction, local police chief Mohammad Daud Askaryar told AFP.

The nationals - a man and a woman who were working for a French aid agency - were taken to

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Where jatka catching goes unabated

Current nets, retail and wholesale markets-- nothing is missing in St Martin's Island, Teknaf

EMRAN HOSSAIN,

back from St Martin's Island

Defying the ban on hilsha fry catching and the use of "current" nets (fine nets), fishermen of St Martin's Island in Teknaf upazila of Cox's Bazar continue to catch them and sell them in retail and wholesale markets.

The fishermen of St Martin's and Teknaf go out to sea in trawlers early morning every day with the banned nets and return in the afternoon with boats full of hilsha fry. They find it easier and profitable to fish hilsha fry as the young underdeveloped fish can be netted near to the coast and within a short time.

"We went fishing at sea a short distance from here for about three hours today and netted around 187 kilograms of hilsha fry using five nets," said Ilias Miah, a fisherman of St Martin's island.

A five- to six-hour fishing spell usually fills their boat and sometimes they go fishing twice a day, as there is a market for hilsha fry. The fish are put on sale openly at different spots along the beach of St

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PHOTO: STAR

Fishermen on St Martin's Island use illegal fine nets to capture hilsha fry in the Bay of Bengal that is prohibited.

7 killed as Tigers blow up bus

AFP, Colombo

Suspected Tamil Tiger rebels set off a roadside blast, killing seven bus passengers and wounding 26 in Sri Lanka yesterday, the government said, marking the latest violence on the island.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) detonated the blast outside the town of Vavuniya, 250 kilometres north of Colombo, the defence ministry said, adding a soldier was among the bus passengers killed.

"A Claymore mine hit the bus as it was halfway through to the destination," an area military official said. "The bomb was rigged up on a tree and manually triggered as the bus passed. It was the work of the Tigers."

However, the pro-rebel Tamilnet.com website said the Tigers denied the charge and blamed military intelligence.

"The Sri Lankan military intelligence establishment has devised bomb attacks and wanton killings

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Prayer Timing		
April 8		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-40	5-15
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-21	6-24
Esha	7-45	8-15
Source: Islamic Foundation		