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Gas crisis to upset bid to ease outage

Govt plan to add 900 MW power to grid might hit a snag

Sharier Khan

The government's bid to drastically reduce the unbearable load shedding by adding 900 megawatts of power to the national grid in the next few months may be upset as Petrobangla is not yet ready to supply the gas needed to run these power plants, says a top power ministry source.

This means that the present power generation capacity of 4,000 MW may go up to 4,900 MW in the next few months but this might not cut load shedding which is currently hovering around 1,000 to 1,400 MW.

"If we accept the World Bank finding that the nation loses two percent of the GDP (gross domestic product) due to power crisis, the government must immediately prioritise gas supply for power

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PHOTO: STAR

Workers of this small toy factory at Islambagh in Old Dhaka use kerosene lamps as severe power crisis grips the city.

Govt calls for austerity in power, gas use

UNB, *Dhaka*

The government called on the people yesterday to observe austerity in electricity and gas consumption in view of the prevailing power generation shortfall.

Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser on Power and Energy M Tamim made the request at a press briefing held at the power ministry.

Blaming the immediate past government's inaction for the crippling power and gas crises, he said, "It seems that most terrible days are lurking ahead but still I'm optimistic."

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Food adviser rules out possibility of famine

Staff Correspondent

Food and Disaster Management Adviser AMM Shawkat Ali yesterday ruled out any possibility of a famine in the country, saying the prevailing situation can at best be described as an increase in "hidden hunger".

"I will not use the term famine to describe the present situation, but it is true there is hidden hunger in the country at present, as was in past," he said.

Shawkat while briefing newsmen on the present food situation in the country however added that, "the extent of the hidden hunger has increased among the ultra poor in recent times."

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Rice deal with Delhi signed

Dhaka to buy 4 lakh tonne rice at $430; market prices go up further

Shaheen Mollah *and* Wasim Bin Habib

Bangladesh yesterday signed an agreement with four Indian state-owned agencies on importing the remaining 4 lakh tonnes of rice out of the 5 lakh tonnes at $430 per tonne.

India had promised to export the rice to Bangladesh following cyclone Sidr last year. Of the rest 1 lakh tonne, 12,000 tonne has already been imported and 46,700 tonne is scheduled to arrive within April 10, a food ministry press release said.

Meanwhile, the price of rice is increasing across the country every day despite adequate supply and the government's safety net programmes like open market sale (OMS) and direct sale, intensifying sufferings of people belonging to the middle and lower classes.

The wholesale prices of rice of different varieties increased by Tk 10-30 per maund yesterday.

Local coarse rice was selling at

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Noab-BSP Statement

Concern over arbitrary price hike of local newsprint

Staff Correspondent

Newspapers Owners Association of Bangladesh (Noab) and Bangladesh Sangbadpatra Parishad (BSP) have expressed deep concern over the arbitrary

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Celebrating Life

Standard Chartered Bank and The Daily Star yesterday jointly launched a contest styled "Celebrating Life" on short documentary and fiction films, photography and lyrics to encourage new talents and project a better image of Bangladesh. Story on page-2

Huda handed 12yrs for ill-gotten wealth

His wife Sigma acquitted

Staff Correspondent

A special court yesterday sentenced former BNP communications minister Nazmul Huda to 12 years' imprisonment on charges of concealing wealth information in his statement submitted to the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) and illegally amassing wealth.

Judge of Special Court-5 Ashraf Hossain in the verdict yesterday acquitted Huda's wife Sigma Huda since the prosecution could not prove the charge brought against her for abetting Huda in amassing the wealth.

Huda was also fined Tk 1 crore, in default he would have to serve one more year in jail.

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EC lags behind reform roadmap

BNP dispute holding it back

Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission (EC) could not complete electoral reforms in over a year, raising doubts if it would be able to have the political parties registered by June as per its time frame.

According to its roadmap announced on July 15 last year, proposals for electoral reforms were to be made into laws by February this year and the political parties were to have four months' time to register with the commission after carrying out necessary reforms.

But for delay in sending the electoral reform proposals to the government to make those into laws the EC might have to change its deadline for registration that has been proposed to be mandatory for the political parties to contest the parliamentary polls.

"It's true we could not complete the tasks relating to electoral reforms within the time frame specified in the roadmap. And in this particular case, the commission has fallen behind schedule," Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda told reporters yesterday.

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Power Plant Graft Case

Court defers hearing as Hasina falls sick

Staff Correspondent

The Special Court dealing with the barge-mounted power plant graft case against detained former premier Sheikh Hasina and seven others yesterday adjourned the arraignment hearing until April 7 as Hasina's health condition deteriorated inside the courtroom.

When defence lawyers sought more time once again yesterday

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List of 1,597 war criminals released

War Crimes Facts Finding Committee to disclose another list soon

Staff Correspondent

War Crimes Facts Finding Committee (WCFFC), a research organisation, yesterday unveiled a list of 1,597 war criminals responsible for the mass killings, rapes and other atrocities during the Liberation War.

Of those on the list, 369 are members of Pakistan military, 1,150 are their local collaborators including members of Razakar and Al Badr [forces formed to aid the occupation army] and Peace Committee, and 78 are Biharis.

Publishing the list at a press conference at the Women's Voluntary Association auditorium

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SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT ON O & A LEVEL AWARD 2006-2007
COMING OUT TOMORROW

Our heartfelt congratulations to
Mr. Mahiuddin Faruqui
Managing Director
MULTIFABS LIMITED

Mr. Mahiuddin Faruqui, Managing Director, Multifabs Limited is receiving the National Export Trophy (Gold) 2004-2005 from Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed, the Chief Adviser.

On receiving the National Export Trophy (Gold) for the year 2004-2005 in recognition of the significant export performance of the company, we all are very proud of you for this outstanding achievement. It is a recognition that you rightly deserve and a credit to Multifabs Limited. We all pray to Almighty Allah for your continued success, good health and long peaceful life. The Project has been financed by Janata Bank Limited.

The Board of Directors, Executives and all Employees of

MULTIFABS LIMITED
EXPORT ORIENTED KNIT COMPOSITE INDUSTRY

Heartiest Congratulations from all employees of KDS Group to
Alhaj Khalilur Rahman
for receiving the National Export Trophy

Alhaj Khalilur Rahman Chairman & MD of KDS Group is receiving the **National Export Trophy** from Commerce Advisor Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman

*KDS Garments has been awarded for its outstanding export achievement with the prestigious National Export Trophy (Silver) for the year 2003-2004 at an award giving ceremony organised by the Ministry of Commerce and Export Promotion Bureau jointly. For this prestigious achivement KDS Group pays gratitude to all it's valued buyers - **H&M, Target, Charming Shoppe, JC Penny, Walmart, George-UK, Speedo, Sears Kmart** etc.*

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