

Khulna power plant shut down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The 110-megawatt (MW) power plant of Khulna Power Station (KPS) at Goalpara was shut down at about 11.00am yesterday due to technical glitch.

The shutdown of the power plant resulted in severe power outage in 21 districts of Khulna and Barisal divisions and greater Faridpur.

KPS control room said only 375 MW of electricity could be supplied yesterday against a demand of above 600 MW in the south-western region.

The outdated 110-MW power plant, which goes out of order often due to technical glitch, can no longer be relied on for uninterrupted power supply, said Superintendent Engineer Abul Kalam Azad.

"It has gone out of order 21 times since 2007," he added.

Besides, the 60-MW power plant, which is undergoing overhauling works, has remained out of order since July 5, 2006. The authorities concerned could not tell when the overhauling works, which began in 2005 at a cost of Tk 70 crore, would be completed.

Moreover, two barge-mounted power plants (BMPP) at Goalpara, each having a capacity of 28 MW of electricity, became inoperative since 2007.

Severe power outages have affected economic activities and normal life in the region.

Country in crisis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday urged the government to increase allocation for agriculture in the next budget.

They said the country is passing through a crisis period as the government failed to procure rice in right time.

The roundtable titled 'Food situation in Bangladesh' was organised by The Main Readers at the Girdap auditorium in the city.

Mahbubul Alam, former adviser to the caretaker government and Editor of The Independent, said there is no difference between 'silent famine' and 'hidden hunger'.

"The fact is that we are in a crisis at present," he added.

Dr MA Matin, former deputy prime minister, said the government is busy in handling big corruptions but ignoring petty corruption for which food crisis has created.

Advocate Rahmat Ali, former Awami League lawmaker, said the present government does not want to curb corruption, they are only trying to harass politicians.

He demanded immediate lifting of the emergency and holding of election.

Abul Hasan Chowdhury, former state minister for foreign affairs,

said the government would have to take short, mid and long-term plan so that the country does not need food import.

Presided over by Mostafa Kamal Majumder, the meeting was also addressed by Maj Gen (ret'd) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim, chairman of Bangladesh Kalyan Party (BKP), Sadek Khan, journalist, and Johiruddin Swapan, former BNP lawmaker.

DU teachers to take class wearing black ribbons

DU CORRESPONDENT

The teachers of Dhaka University (DU) will take class wearing black ribbons on April 17 demanding immediate withdrawal of the state of emergency.

The decision came following a general meeting of the Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) at the association's club building yesterday night.

The meeting also decided to go with legal process in higher court to hold its executive committee election 2008 which was postponed on April 10 following a court injunction.

English debate workshop held in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

A day-long workshop titled 'English Debate Workshop' was held in the port city yesterday with a view to helping young debaters in developing their skills.

Star Campus, a weekly publication of The Daily Star, and Drishty, a cultural organisation, jointly organised the workshop at Theatre Institute of Chittagong (TIC) in association with International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC) and Mastermind International School.

Presided over by Drishty President Masud Bakul, the inaugural programme was attended by Vice Chancellor (VC) of Chittagong Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (CVASU) Dr Nitish Chandra Devnath as the chief guest.

William Carey Academy Administrative Director Marilou Long was present at the function as the special guest.

Speakers at the workshop laid emphasis on achieving proper skills to deliver better performance in debate competitions.

Dr Nitish said more students in school, college and university levels are now participating in debate competitions in comparison with the past. The educational institutions and some organisations are also offering more scopes for them to participate in extra-curricular activities.

Marilou Long expressed hope that the workshop would help the young debaters of different academic institutions to learn something new from a common platform.

A total of 82 students from 14 English medium schools -- Mastermind International School, Sunshine Grammar School, Oxbridge International School, Little Jewels, Bangladesh Elementary School, Chittagong Grammar School, Cantonment English School, William Carey Academy, Global Scholar School, Summerfield's Tutorials, Cider International School, European Grammar School, Standard School and Bay View School -- participated in the workshop.

Around 38 students from Chittagong University (CU), Premier University, University of Science and Technology Chittagong (USTC), IIUC and Independent University Bangladesh (IUB) also participated.

Best debater of Worlds Debate 2008 Sinha Ibn Humayun from North South University (NSU), debater of Worlds Debate 2007 Mabru Wasey of Islamic University of Technology (IUT), Rishad Shah of IUT Debate Club and Drishty Joint Secretary Adnan Mannan were the trainers at the workshop.

During the workshop, two model debates, styled Asian parliamentary debate and world format, were also held which were participated by Shaikat Fahmid of Cider School, Masudur Rahman of Drishty, Yard of CU, Dona Roy from USTC and Sinha Ibn Humayun.

Later, the participants of the workshop were distributed certificates at a function.

Local Bangla daily Purbokone Managing Editor Jashim Uddin Chowdhury was present at the ceremony as the chief guest.

IIUC Registrar Sqn Ldr (Retd) Nurul Islam, Mastermind International School Principal Golam Abu Mohammad and Advocate Mahbub Alam were present as the special guests.



Chittagong Veterinary and Animal Sciences University Vice Chancellor Dr Nitish Chandra Devnath speaks at the inaugural function of a workshop titled 'English Debate Workshop' at Theatre Institute of Chittagong auditorium yesterday.

UNICEF REGIONAL DIRECTOR MEETS FOREIGN, FINANCE ADVISERS

Efforts to reach MDGs lauded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A high official of the Unicef has praised the government for keeping Bangladesh on track to reach some important million development goals (MDGs) such as reduction of child mortality, tackling of under-nutrition and enrollment in primary education.

The appreciation came from Daniel Toole, the newly appointed regional director of Unicef for South Asia, when he paid separate call on Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury and Finance Adviser M Azizul Islam in the capital yesterday.

During the meetings, Toole informed them of Unicef's plan to hold an All Asia Meeting on Neonatal, Child and Maternal Health in Dhaka later in the year.

"Child health continues to pose a major challenge in the region with 3.1 million children dying before their fifth birthday in South Asia alone," he added.

Toole urged the government to invest greater efforts in other sectors such as maternal mortality, gender disparity and access to safe water and sanitation, where progress towards meeting the MDGs remain slow.

Indeed, without significant progress in South Asia, the world

will fail to achieve the MDGs, he added.

Referring to Unicef's long-standing relationship with Bangladesh, the regional director thanked the foreign and finance advisers for the continued support and leadership that Unicef received in implementing programmes for improving the lives of children and women.

"Unicef is deeply concerned on the short- and long-term impact of recurring emergencies that Bangladesh had to endure in 2007 on children's health, education and protection. Children and women often bear the worst brunt of emergencies," he added.

"I would like to express Unicef's solidarity with the flood- and cyclone-affected people. I also want to reiterate that Unicef is always ready to support the government to provide the best possible opportunities for children especially in time of emergencies," Toole said.

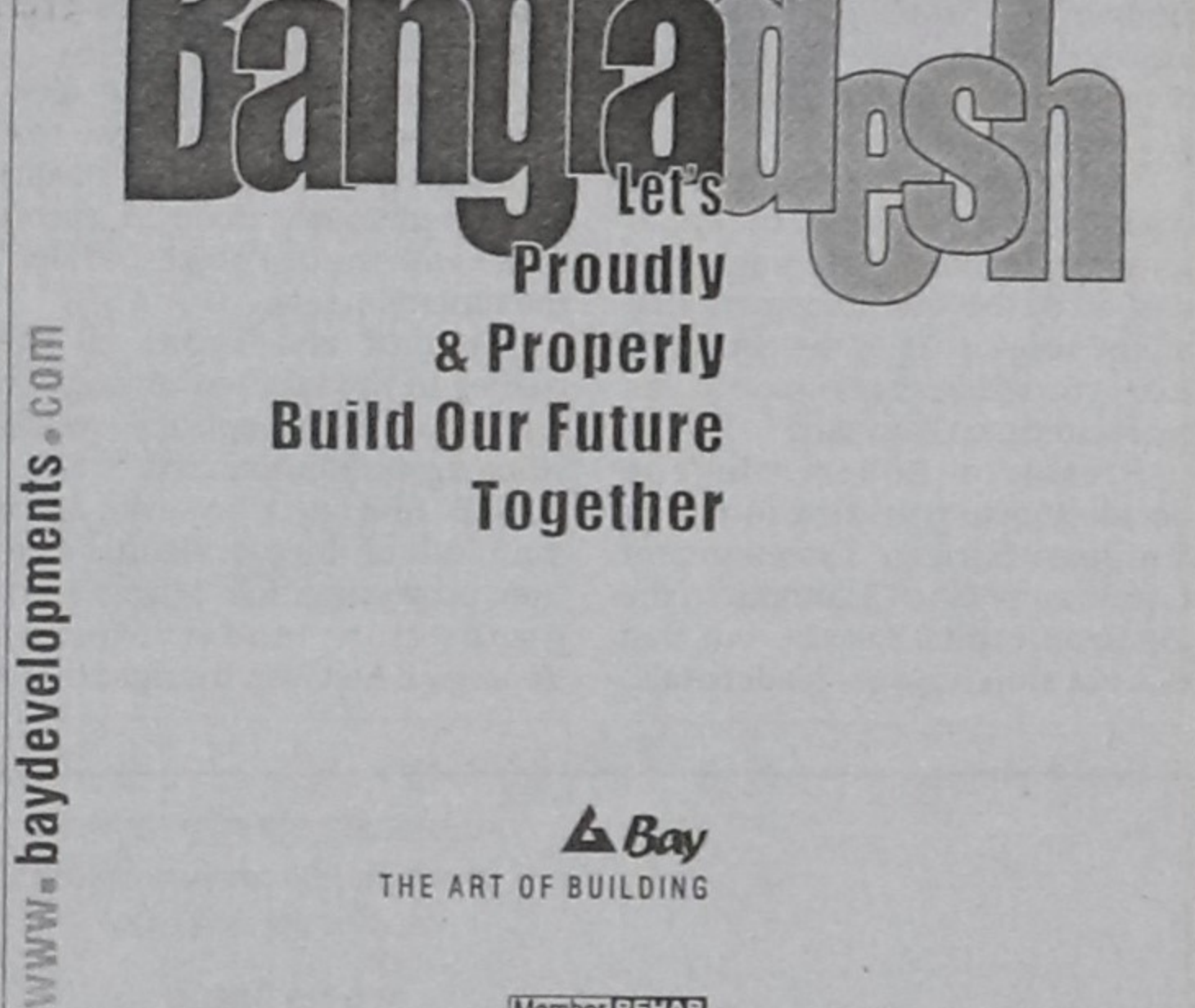
During his stay in the capital, the regional director will attend the inaugural session of the Regional Policy-Makers' Symposium on Social Protection to be organised by Unicef Regional Office for South Asia from April 15 to 17.

Photo exhibition on char people begins

A 10-day photograph exhibition styled 'Nadi o Jibon: Dipcharbashir Jibonchitra (River and life: life sketch of char people)' by Syed Badrul Karim began at the Bengal Gallery in the city on Saturday, says a press release.

Unnayan Shamannay organised the exhibition with a view to help people know the life struggle of the char people against extreme poverty.

The exhibition will remain open till April 21 from 12:00pm to 8:00pm daily.



Programmes to celebrate Pahela Baishakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different socio-cultural organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes to celebrate 'Pahela Baishakh', the first day of the Bangla New Year-1415, with due traditional festivity.

The week-long Baishakhi celebrations include discussions, cultural programmes and a fortnightly book fair to be organised by the Bangla Academy.

Sargam Lalitakala Academy will organise a cultural programme at Dhanmondi Lake area. A cultural programme will be held at 7:00pm on the Mukti Khelaghar Ashar premises, while the National Press Club will organise a cultural programme including breakfast in the morning.

Baishakhi Utshab Bastabayan Parishad, Shishu-Jubo Sangskritik Jote, Rishir Shilpi Gosthi, Baridhara Society, Nazrul Institute, Hotel Sarina, Silverdale Preparatory and Girls' High School, Geetanjali and Gulshan Society will organise cultural programmes, discussions and food festivals to mark the day.

Nokia Baishakhi Fusion Concert will be held at 12:30pm at Gulshan Youth Club, while Proshika, Kendriyo

Khelaghar Ashar, Amader Pathshala and Basic Bank will also organise different programmes highlighting the significance of the day.

Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) will organise a 10-day trade fair.

The Baishakhi Utshab will kick off at the Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) at Dhaka University (DU) from tomorrow. The five-day festival will be held with the theme 'Climate change and its effect on regional culture'. Artists from different regions will participate in the programme.

Meanwhile, United Fair Corporation organises a Baishakhi fair at the Bashundhara City Expo Centre.

Mohanagar Sarbojaneen Puja Committee will organise a two-day Baishakhi fair at the Dhakeshwari temple.

Bangladesh Muktioddha Sanghad Knirachakra will organise a discussion and mital mehfil to pray for the departed souls of the freedom fighters who sacrificed their supreme lives in the Liberation War in 1971 at Osmani Udyan at 3:00pm.

In addition, Bangladesh Cultural Reporters' Association will organise

programme on Shiddheshwari Girls' High School premises.

Kidney Awareness, Monitoring and Prevention Society (KAMPS) will provide free health services on the DU campus near anti-terrorism sculpture 'Raju'. Voluntary blood will also be collected from the programme. Orca Blood for Life will also organise voluntary blood donation programme in the TSC area.

Leaders of Bangladesh Awami League wished the countrymen on the eve of the Bangla New Year. Pointing the bomb blast incident at the Ramna Batumi in 1408 celebration programme, the leaders said the culprits of the attack are yet to be brought into the book.

They urged all to come forward to make a democratic and welfare country with the spirit of communal harmony.

Wishing the countrymen, ASM Abdur Rab in a statement urged all to make commitment to be united in eradicating all irregularities and bad elements from the society.

Former minister and Secretary General of Jatiya Party Sheikh Shahidul Islam also wished the countrymen.

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