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2 power projects get delayed for a month on bidders' pressure

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Power Cell under the power ministry has delayed the Bibiyana and Sirajganj 450 megawatt (MW) power projects for a month under pressure from two US bidders.

The bidders AES and Chevron had been asking the bid submission date of Bibiyana power project be pushed back four to six months saying they cannot confirm availability of plant machinery due to high global demand for power plant equipment in recent months.

The Power Cell settled for moving the Bibiyana project's bid submission date to July 15 from June 11.

Consequently, its other bidding process for Sirajganj power project will be delayed by another month. A top official of the Power Cell said the bid closing of the Sirajganj project will be in September.

The government prioritised

these projects as the past alliance government failed to implement any new large power projects and contributed to the present trend of load shedding.

"There is a scarcity of engineering and procurement contractors worldwide due to high demand for power projects," said a Power Cell source, adding, "We have to accept the fact that the bidders will have to ensure plant machinery when they submit their bids. This is why we have delayed the bid submission date for a month or so."

On April 16, Summit Industrial and Merchantile Corporation appealed to the government to reconsider the order disqualifying it from the Bibiyana and Sirajganj project tenders.

Summit feels it was unjustly pushed out of competition by an arbitrary evaluation of World Bank's sister concern International Finance Corporation (IFC), which is also the Bibiyana project's consultant for the Power Cell. The IFC calculated the net value of Summit at only \$35 million. The auditor's report submitted to the Power Cell puts the figure at \$120 million.

Both Bibiyana and Sirajganj tenders now lack competition. The Bibiyana scheme has three bidders—AES, Chevron (Bibiyana gas field's operator) and a consortium led by Powertek and the Sirajganj scheme just has AES and Powertek.

This competition shrank due to tactics used by Powertek and its consortium partner Kepco who merged after being pre-qualified to

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3 graft cases against Obaidul Kader stayed

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday stayed for a month the proceedings in three corruption cases against detained former state minister for youth and sports Obaidul Kader.

An HC division bench comprising Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Shamim Hasnain also issued rules upon the

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SCRAP METAL Govt probe body orders ship breakers to curb price

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A government-formed probe committee yesterday asked ship breakers to fix a rational price for scrap metals by today.

The probe body led by Housing and Public Works Secretary SM

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CNG-run bus operators hike fare despite govt directive

Mobile court starts drive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The CNG-run bus operators continue to charge extra fares ignoring the government directive, leading to heated rows between the passengers and bus staffs in many places in the capital yesterday.

As a result, the authorities were forced to deploy police at different bus stops in the city.

Besides, a mobile court of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) also started a drive against the CNG-run bus services charging increased fare.

The Association of CNG Bus Companies (ABC) is going to hold a press conference today demanding increase in bus fares.

Regular commuters from

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PHOTO: STAR

Bus owners have increased fares on all routes in the capital following price hike of compressed natural gas (CNG). Ticket sellers stamp increased fares on tickets at a bus stop near the Jatiya Press Club.

Prayer Timing

April 29

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-20	4-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-29	6-34
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

UN starts meet to hammer out food crisis battle plan

APP, Berne

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon began talks yesterday with key development agencies on how to tackle the crisis provoked by soaring food and fuel prices.

"This is an exciting time for the United Nations, but it is also a time when we are challenged to exert our best efforts to rise to the expectations that the world is placing on us," Ban said ahead of meetings in the Swiss capital.

The UN was to hammer out a battle plan of emergency measures at the two-day conference in Berne,

while exploring other longer-term measures to solve the global food crisis.

The talks will see advocates of protectionism face off against those who favour opening up markets, as well as arguments between both supporters and opponents of biofuels.

Rising populations, strong demand from developing countries, increased cultivation of crops for biofuels and increasing floods and droughts have sent food prices soaring across the globe.

Ban met first with officials from

Chevron plans to complete seismic survey by mid-2008

UNB, Dhaka

International oil-company Chevron plans to complete its 3D seismic survey in Moulvibazar gasfield by the middle of this year as it is working in full swing to strike new hydrocarbon reserves in the area.

Chevron Bangladesh President Steve Wilson expressed his company's firm belief that if they continue their work as planned, they should finish the survey before monsoon.

"We continue to advance our efforts and hope to complete the survey around mid-year," he told

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Picture taken on Saturday shows the fire at Khashi Punji in Lawachhara National Park while Chevron was conducting a three-dimensional seismic survey. Locals and forest department personnel doused the fire.

Asst judges get senior judicial magistracy power

UNB, Dhaka

The government has given senior judicial magistracy power to assistant judges as a temporary measure to deal with the shortage of senior assistant judges.

The president gave the power to the assistant judges by amending the Bangladesh Judicial Service Rules 2007 exercising his power conferred by the constitution.

A gazette notification in this regard was published on April 22.

According to the notification, the government on advice of the Supreme Court can make posting of assistant judges to the post of senior judicial magistrates in

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