

ELECTRICITY TO ALL BY 2020 1m solar household systems by 2012 to achieve target

2.30 lakh rural households brought under solar power system in five years

BSS, Dhaka

Over 2.30 lakh rural households were brought under the solar power system in last five years by Infrastructure Development Company Ltd (IDCOL) as alternative source of energy.

Executive Director of IDCOL, a company under the Ministry of Finance, M Ehsanul Haque yesterday said they have set a target to install one million Solar Household Systems (SHS) by 2012 to help government achieve the target of providing electricity to all by 2020.

"SHS system, containing photo voltaic panel, battery, charge controller, solar lamp and switch, is a convenient mode of supplying power for small electrical loads such as lights, radio, cassette players and black and white TV," he said.

Although available for limited number of hours in a day, the SHS programme has brought in positive changes in the economy of the rural people, he said.

"Now they are using SHS in the advantage of their income generating activities and working hours have been increased for small businessmen, weavers, tailors, hair dressers, and makers of handicraft items, IDCOL chief said.

In addition, the use of TV and radio has enhanced rural people's access to the outer world. Many women opined that they were feeling more secured at night after installation of SHS, Ehsanul said.

IDCOL is implementing the solar electrification programme in remote areas far from the power grid since 2003 through 15 NGOs and Micro Finance Institutions (MFI) including Grameen Shakti and Brac with financial support of different development partners.

World Bank and KfW (German development financing bank) have provided 51 million US dollar and 9.68 million euro respectively as loan while Global Environmental Facility (GEF), KfW and GTZ (German technical cooperation agency) gave 4.8 million US dollar, 4.6 million euro and 2.7 million euro respectively as grant for the programme, IDCOL

sourced said.

Among the SHSs providing NGOs, Grameen Shakti holds the lion share of solar panels, being constructed in the country.

"So far, we have installed 1.70 lakh solar panels with an average per month installation rate of 8,000 panels and it is being increased at a fast pace," Head of International Cooperation and Development Department of Grameen Shakti, Dr MS Islam said.

The NGOs are providing a wide range of power generating capacity of Solar Photo Voltaic (PV) panels from 30 watts to 120 watts. For example, a 50 watt PV panel can run four LED lights and one black and white television, he added.

The price for the whole SHS system including PV, battery, wire and other accessories ranges between Tk 21,000 and Tk 70,000 and consumers can purchase a solar home system both in cash and credit.

"Recently, we have started 10 watt panel at a cost of Tk 8,500 targeting the most poor families," he said, adding, "a 10 watt panel can run two to three lights."

To enjoy the credit facility, a customer has to pay a minimum ten to fifteen percent of total cost of a system as down payment, rest of the amount can be paid by installment within two to five years.

Selim Al Deen's birth anniversary festival begins August 18

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy and Dhaka Theatre jointly have taken a six-day programme to celebrate the 59th birth anniversary of late playwright Selim Al Deen.

The programme beginning in the city on August 18, the birthday of the dramatist, has been arranged to recall his contribution.

The programmes include drama, documentary film show, exhibition of mementos, installation arts and seminar.



Railings on a part of the Buriganga Bridge-1 at Postogola in the city have been missing for long, but the authorities have turned a blind eye. The photo was taken yesterday.

CONTRIBUTION OF SHAHEED ZAYEDA RECALLED

Recover 45,000 acres of khas land, punish grabbers

Speakers urge govt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Speakers at a seminar yesterday urged the government to recover khas (fellow) land from the grabbers, who occupied 45,000 acres of land either forcibly or by making forged deeds in the district, and distribute the land among the landless people as it is their constitutional right.

They also demanded arrest and punishment to the land grabbers who shot dead landless leader Shaheed Zayed Khatun at Baburabad under Kaliganj upazila on July 27 in 1998 as the landless

demanding khas land.

They called on the landless people to be united in asserting their rights to the government khas land.

Styled "Ten years of self-sacrifice of landless leader Shaheed Zayed Khatun: Expectations and gains of the landless," the seminar was jointly organised by Central Bhumi Committee (land committee), Manusher Jonno Foundation and Uttaran at Sadar upazila auditorium with Bhumi Committee President advocate Abdur Rahim in the chair.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (DC) Revenue Md. Abdul Aziz was present as the chief guest while it was addressed by freedom fighters Prof Abu Ahmed and Morol Abdus Salam, journalist Kalyan Banarjee, district Awami League leader Azibar Rahman, Central Bhumi Committee leaders advocate Abul Kalam Azad, Sheikh Abdul Mahit, advocate Azharul Islam, advocate Pulin Bihari Sarkar, Saifullah Laskar and Prof Abdul Khaleque and NGO leader Dr Nazrul Islam.

Paying tribute to Shaheed Zayed, the speakers said landless housewife Zayed Khatun sacrificed her life for the landless people to establish their constitutional rights to khas land when influential land grabbers attacked the landless to evict them from khas land.

The unity of the landless can force the influential land grabbers

Iftekhar greets police peacekeepers

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury yesterday congratulated 193 Bangladesh police peacekeepers who had received peace awards for their services in East Timor.

"This is a matter of pride for all Bangladeshis and I congratulate each and every recipient of the peace award. Bangladesh's contribution to UN peacekeeping is legendary, and our peacekeepers deserve the highest praise for raising the positive image of our country in the world beyond," he said.

Deaths condoled

In a separate message, he condoled the death by accidental burning of four Bangladeshis in Saudi Arabia last Friday.

Iftekhar prayed for the departed souls and instructed the Bangladesh Mission in Saudi Arabia to expedite action regarding dispatch of the bodies home.

More donation for AMCH

BSS, Dhaka

Dr Suraya Khanam donated Tk five lakh for the construction of Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital (AMCH).

She handed over a cheque for Tk five lakh to Dhaka Ahsania Mission President Kazi Rafiqul Alam at a ceremony at Dhaka Ahsania Mission Bhaban in the city yesterday, says a press release.

DAM President Kazi Rafiqul Alam said that with the support of the government and generous people, the construction of the AMCH project is going on. A total of Tk 256 crore is needed to complete the construction of the hospital.

VoIP equipment, heroin seized

CU CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized a huge amount of voice over internet protocol (VoIP) equipment worth around Tk 15 lakh and 175 grams of heroin from a house in Nasirabad area in Chittagong early yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, a Rab-7 squad of Chittagong raided the rented flat of one Mohammad Yusuf in Sananda residential area under Panchlaish Police Station at around 6.00am.

They recovered five quintums, 37 teller sets, 37 chargers of different types, four batteries, four multi-plugs and one sack of wires from the house, sources said.

The elite crime busters also recovered 175 grams of heroin from the drawing room of the flat during the drive.

Sources said filing of cases in these connections are under processes.

Shibir attack on RU VC protested

DU CORRESPONDENT

The JSD-backed Chhatra League staged a demonstration on the Dhaka University (DU) campus yesterday protesting the attack on acting vice chancellor of Rajshahi University by Shibir cadres on Friday.

Leaders and activists of the organisation took out a procession from Madhu's Canteen at around 12:00pm and later held a rally near Aparajeyo Bangla.

Speaking at the rally, the student leaders demanded exemplary punishment to the Shibir cadres responsible for the attack.

They also demanded a ban on religion-based politics and threatened to launch a tougher programme across the country if their demands go unheeded.

Chhatra League president Hossain Ahmed Tahir and general secretary Muhammad Samsul Islam spoke at the rally.

A group of Shibir cadres assaulted acting VC Prof Mamnunul Keramat

and some teachers of Rajshahi University on Friday as teachers tried to talk them into lifting roadblocks put up on Dhaka-Rajshahi Highway by the Shibir cadres.

Fire in city flour mills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Flour, wheat, rice and other valuables worth about Tk 10 lakh were gutted in a fire in a flour mills at Rampura under Khilgaon police station in the city last night.

No casualties, however, was reported.

Fire Service and Civil Defence (FSCD) sources said the fire was originated from an electric short circuit at about 10:45pm. Two units of fire service put out the fire at about 11:50pm.

The sources said they could rescue valuables worth about Tk 18 lakh.

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Guests hold copies of a book titled 'Phire Jete Chai: Diary Smritikatha O Sakhatkar' at its publication ceremony at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. From right are eminent journalist ABM Musa, Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury, Munaim Sarker, Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui and Kazi Madina. Santosh Gupta Smriti Parishad organised the event on the occasion of the fourth death anniversary of journalist Santosh Gupta.

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