

# Move to set up 1000 MW power plant within decade

Russian team arrives tomorrow to discuss project issues

UNB, Dhaka

The government is keen to go ahead with the nuclear power plant project with view to setting up at least a 1000 MW plant in the country within a decade.

Normally, it needs eight to nine years to set up a 600-1000 MW power plant in any country, as it requires fulfilling many conditions.

According to official sources, right now the government has three initial proposals from three countries -- Russia, China and South Korea.

But the Russian proposal tops the list, as the nuclear-rich country has been keen to move ahead with the Bangladesh project under a state-to-state bilateral agreement.

As part of the move, the Russian ambassador in Dhaka recently met with State Minister for Science and ICT Yeafesh Osman to discuss the project related issues.

As follow-up of the envoy's move, a Russian technical expert team will arrive in the country tomorrow and will stay here three days to discuss the proposed power plant issues with the authorities.

Science and ICT Ministry officials hinted that Bangladesh might move for an unsolicited offer-based project to implement the nuclear power plant project.

In that case, the present public pro-

curement regulation (PPR) may need certain changes.

But the main problem to deal with the project will be mobilising funds in the present perspective of global financial economic meltdown. Because, a 1000 MW nuclear power plant will need a US\$ 1.2-1.5 billion investment.

The move for installing a nuclear power plant was originally initiated during the previous BNP regime. Later, the caretaker government had expedited the process and obtained a clearance certificate from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to go ahead with a nuclear power plant project.

The caretaker government also launched a site preparation project at Rooppur with technical and financial support of the IAEA to make the site suitable for a power plant.

The IAEA provided US\$ 366,000 for the project. Rooppur is a very old site, which was first undertaken by the then East Pakistan government for the same purpose.

"The site preparatory project is going on in full swing and it would be completed by the end of the year," said a top official of the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC), which has been implementing the project.

He also mentioned that an IAEA technical team also visited the site in November to have a physical inspection

before giving its necessary nod to Bangladesh.

"Simultaneously, a safeguard document and a model agreement document are now at the final stage of preparation. After completion, we've to place it to the IAEA," the BAEC official said.

Science and ICT Ministry officials said that the nuclear power plant operation is a very sensitive work and it needs highly skilled manpower.

But Bangladesh does not have such manpower available at present. So, from now on a strong move should be made to develop skilled manpower to run a future project, a senior official at the Science and ICT Ministry said.

He also mentioned that the government had approached the IAEA to provide technical support to create such trained and skilled manpower.

According to another top official of BAEC, at present world's 23 percent electricity comes from nuclear plants.

Neighbouring India is leading in nuclear power generation in the South Asian region as it has 17 nuclear power plants while another five is under construction.

Russia generates 17 percent of its total electricity from nuclear plants while USA generates 20 percent. France leads in nuclear power generation among the European nations.



PHOTO: STAR

Former adviser to the caretaker government Dr M Shawkat Ali speaks at a memorial meeting to pay tribute to poet Abu Zafar Obaidullah at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. Centre for Bangladesh Culture organised the programme.

## Tributes paid to poet Abu Zafar Obaidullah

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a memorial meeting yesterday paid rich tributes to poet Abu Zafar Obaidullah.

Centre for Bangladesh Culture organised the meeting at the National Press Club in the city to mark the eighth death anniversary of the legendary poet.

Poet Rabiul Hussain said Obaidullah's works portrayed his devotion to his mother, motherland and mother tongue.

Former secretary Ataul Haq highlighted Obaidullah's outstanding contribution to the Language Movement and Bangla literature.

He was a master of words who could easily express his feelings in a few words, he added.

He was a poet with elegance who was truthful to his political job and more of a civil servant than a bureaucrat, said Mahbul Alam, a former colleague of the poet.

The poet's wife Mahzabin Obaidullah Moni, their daughter Sumana Khan Kakan, his brother lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon and former adviser to a caretaker government Shawkat Ali also spoke on the occasion.

## One killed, 3 injured in wall collapse

UNB, Jamalpur

A construction worker was killed and three others were injured when a wall collapsed on them at Bojrapur in Jamalpur town on Thursday afternoon.

The dead was identified as Abdul Momin.

Witnesses said the wall of a septic tank collapsed on the workers at about 4:00pm when they were working in an under-construction building, leaving Momin dead on the spot and injuring three others.

## Khas lands to be allocated among 8,500 families

BSS, Jamalpur

Land Minister Mohammad Rezaul Karim Hira yesterday said that agricultural khas lands would be allocated among 8,500 landless families by June 30 this year.

"The lands would be brought under government control from the land grabbers and those would be distributed among the real landless people by June next," he said.

The minister said this while visiting the land office at Lakhichar union under Jamalpur Sadar upazila and reviewing the activities of distribution of khas lands among landless people, an official handout said.

Rezaul Karim said that notice would be served to the land grabbers for mutual understanding in giving up their occupancy of the lands.

Otherwise lawful actions would be taken against the violators of law, he added.

The minister received 15 applications from landless and river erosion victims during his visit to the land office.

He instructed the concerned officials to send the applications to UP chairmen and union land offices for examining and sent them to the district and upazila committees for final approval.

In replying to a question of journalists, the land minister said government has instructed district administration to take necessary steps to implement housing project.

He said permanent houses would be built in every upazila of the country for the landless and homeless people with financial cooperation of the development partners, the handout added.

## Robbers kill bus passenger, loot valuables

UNB, Kishoreganj

Robbers stabbed passengers of a BRTC bus and looted valuables worth Tk 50,000 from them in Narayanganj on Thursday night, leaving a person dead.

The dead was identified as Khokon, 32, of Kuliarchar upazila in Kishoreganj.

Witnesses said when the Kishoreganj-bound BRTC bus from Dhaka reached Purinda at around 9:00pm, a gang of four robbers intercepted the bus and took its control after beating up the driver mercilessly.

The robbers stabbed passengers indiscriminately and took away cash, gold jewellery and other valuables from them.

Seriously injured Khokon was rushed to Bhagalpur Medical College Hospital in Kishoreganj where he succumbed to his injuries at 4:00am yesterday.

## Husband beats wife to death

UNB, Narayanganj

A man beat his wife to death at Sayedpur in Sadar upazila yesterday following a family feud yesterday.

The dead was identified as Shahnaz Begum, 26, wife of Noor Mohammad.

The police said Noor Mohammad had an altercation with his wife at noon. At one stage, he hit Shahnaz in her head with a shovel at about 12:30pm, killing her on the spot.

Noor Mohammad went into hiding soon after the killing.

## Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Jahanara Begum, 32, has been suffering from polymyositis, an inflammatory disorder of skeletal muscle that causes weakness for over four months.

Lying on the hospital bed, the mother of two little children, is fighting for her life as her condition is deteriorating day by day.

Wife of Aminul Islam, a small trader of Badda, Jahanara is now undergoing treatment at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital.

Doctors said the patient needs better treatment which involves Tk 15 to Tk 18 lakh, adding that she needs to be given seven injections costing Tk 1.50 lakh each.

Now Aminul has appealed to the generous people to extend financial help to save his wife's life.

Contributions can be sent to Aminul Islam, Savings A/C No. 1210004732-2, Sonali Bank, Karwan Bazar branch, Dhaka, or Ahsania Bastra Bitan, A/C No. 1512200910446001, Brac Bank Ltd, Rampura branch. Phone: 01196151019.



PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gives away Bazul Rahman Memorial Award-2008 to a winner at the award giving ceremony at the National Museum auditorium in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

## Boost farm output to ensure food security

Says minister

UNB, Chittagong

Shipping Minister Dr M Afsarul Amin yesterday underscored the need for increasing agricultural production to ensure food security in the country.

"There is no alternative to boosting agricultural production to ensure food security," he said while addressing a seminar titled 'Let agriculture be the main weapon of change' at Muslim Institute

Hall.

Chittagong University Vice Chancellor Dr Abu Yusuf Alam inaugurated the seminar while general secretary of Diploma Krishibid Institution of Bangladesh (DKIB), Chittagong SS Abdul Malek presented the keynote paper at the seminar.

The minister also urged the agronomists to invent new technologies for the development of the farmers and the country.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Hasan Mahmud, Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology Vice Chancellor Dr Shyamol Kanti Biswas and Chittagong University of Veterinary and Animal Science Vice Chancellor Dr Nitish Chandra Debnath, among others, addressed the seminar. Chittagong unit president the DKIB Babu Jadunath Dutta chaired the programme.

## '90pc people suffer from gum-related problems'

UNB, Dhaka

About 90 percent people of the country are suffering from gum-related problems that might cause severe health problems like cancer, kidney and heart diseases, experts said yesterday.

They were addressing a book launching ceremony titled 'Danta O Mukher Roger Sathe Deher Roger Samparka' by Prof Dr Arupratan Chowdhury at Birdem Hospital.

Aagami Prokashoni, a publication house, organised the function.

Planning Minister AK Khandaker urged the dentists to launch a comprehensive social campaign to protect the country's poor and villagers from severe tooth problems.

"A campaign can help the rural and illiterate people live a better life without tooth problems," he said.

Dr Morol Nazrul Islam alleged that some unscrupulous businesspeople are doing business in the name of 'Cosmetic Dentistry', a comprehensive oral care to optimally improve dental health.

To whiten teeth, he said, they use 'tooth bleaching' which reduces enamel, causing many tooth problems.

National Professor Nurul Islam said, "One should undergo tooth checkup at least twice a year," he added.

Birdem Chairman Prof Dr Azad Khan said the government should take initiatives to include health, hygienic and dental issues in the textbooks.

## 550 bottles of Phensidyl seized

One arrested

UNB, Gazipur

The police arrested a drug peddler with 550 bottles of Indian Phensidyl syrup at Abdar Bazar in Shripur upazila on Thursday night.

The arrestee was identified as Azad, 32.

Acting on a tip-off, the police arrested Azad during a raid on his house at Abdar bazar.

Later, on the basis of his confessional statement, the law enforcers seized 550 bottles of Phensidyl syrup in six sacks. But his accomplice Abdul Aziz managed to flee the scene.



PHOTO: STAR

Workers of Basic Apparels stage a demonstration in front of the High Court in the city yesterday demanding payment of their salary arrears.

## BY-POLLS TO THREE JS SEATS Preparations complete in Rangpur, Kurigram

BSS, Rangpur

The authorities have completed all-out preparations and measures for holding the April 2 by-polls in a free, fair, transparent, impartial and credible manner in 3 parliamentary seats in Rangpur and Kurigram.

Chief Election Commissioner Dr ATM Shamsul Huda is expected to visit Rangpur-6 and Rangpur-3 constituencies and address the concerned election officials at Pirganj upazila parishad auditorium and Rangpur Zila School tomorrow, officials said.

The concerned returning officers have already formed election monitoring committees, law and order control

cells and vigilance and observation teams for the purpose.

A total of 11 candidates are vying in the by-polls in three parliamentary seats of Rangpur-3 (Sadar), Rangpur-6 (Pirganj) and Kurigram-2 (Sadar-Fulbari-Rajarhat), officials said.

Selection and training of a total of 387 presiding officers for 387 polling centres, 2,193 assistant presiding officers and 4,278 polling officers and sending of transparent ballot boxes have already been completed.

Meanwhile, the election campaign has now reached at the highest peaks everywhere as electioneering will end at midnight on March 31 in both urban and rural areas.

Acting Deputy Election

Commissioner (DEC) Shubhash Chandra Sarker of the RREO said all officials and employees concerned at all levels in Rangpur and Kurigram have been working relentlessly for holding the by-polls peacefully.

The Rangpur-6 JS seat was vacated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, while Rangpur-3 and Kurigram-2 were by former president and Jatiya Party Chairman Afhaj Hussein Muhammad Ershad.

The Election Commission has appointed Shubhash Chandra Sarker, who is also the district election officer (DEO) of Rangpur, as the RO for Rangpur-3 and Rangpur-6 seats, while DEO of Kurigram Nuruzzaman Talukder as the RO for Kurigram-2.

## 'Bangladesh to discuss ways to stop terror financing with neighbours'

BSS, Dhaka

State Minister for Home Affairs Tanzim Ahmed Sohel Taj yesterday said Bangladesh would discuss with its neighbours in South Asia to explore means to stop terrorist financing and fight militancy.

"We will discuss with the neighbouring and friendly countries to find ways to strengthen its effort in tackling financial supports to extremists and combating terrorism," he told newsmen ahead of his departure for the United States to join the 15th annual command council for Asia Pacific region on March 29 in Hawaii.

Dhaka would also raise its earlier proposal of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for constituting a regional task force to fight terrorism in South Asia under an intensified regional cooperation, he added.

Taj, however, said terrorist activities of the extremist religious groups are now under control. An intensified security campaign is also underway to uproot the militancy.

Awami League in its election manifesto suggested formation of a South Asian task force to fight militancy, while the new government last month okayed a tough anti-terrorism ordinance enacted by the caretaker government.

## Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Priyantha Fernando, chairman of Riverside Sweaters Limited, former general manager of Lakshma Sweaters Limited and former president of Sri Lanka Association of Bangladesh, passed away at Apollo Hospitals in the city on Thursday, says a press release.

He left behind his wife and daughter and a host of admirers and relatives to mourn his death.

He will be buried in Sri Lanka.

Monish Chandra Sen

BSS, Noakhali

Monish Chandra Sen popularly known as 'Sen Sir', a schoolteacher and sports organiser in Noakhali, passed away due to old-age complications at his residence yesterday at the age of 79.

He left behind by his wife, two sons, four daughters, and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

He was cremated at Sonapur Mahashmashan yesterday.

Lawmaker Ekramul Karim Chowdhury, president of district BNP and former lawmaker Md Shahjahan, president of district Awami League Prof Mohammad Hanif, president and secretary of district teachers' association expressed their deep shock at his death.

DHAKA TODAY

### CPD conference

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) organises a two-day conference on 'Development with equity and justice: Immediate tasks for the newly elected government'. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 9:30am.

### Seminar

Bangladesh Foundation for Development Research organises a seminar on genocide and impunity. Venue: Sufia Kamal Auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

### Talk

Prof AK Roy will deliver a talk on 'History of science: Bhaskaracharya -- the last shining star of ancient Indian mathematics'. Venue: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh. Time: 4:00pm.

### Roundtable

Masjid Council organises a roundtable on role of the religious leaders in preventing terrorism. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.

### Rickshaw festival

Bangladesh Changemakers arranges a rickshaw festival. Venue: New Colony Field, Lalmeta. Time: 10:00am.

### Children's fair

The inaugural ceremony of a children's fair will be held. MMC and Plan Bangladesh jointly arranged the fair. Venue: Shishu Academy. Time: 9:30am.



## Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind may occur at a few places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at one or two places over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions in the next 24 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:13pm today and rises at 5:53am tomorrow.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 34.6 degree Celsius was recorded at Jessore and the lowest of 16.2 degrees at Rangpur.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Dhaka	29.8	22.5	71	50
Chittagong	30.6	21.8	75	73
Rajshahi	32.6	18.2	78	60
Khulna	32.0	20.5	70	62
Barisal	32.0	21.4	59	72
Sylhet	30.0	19.3	72	62
Cox's Bazar	32.6	24.0	71	58