

DHAKA TUESDAY JUNE 16, 2009

# Govt keen to decentralise power, strengthen rural economy: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the present government wants to ensure a better life for the people through decentralising power and strengthening the rural economy.

Hasina said the proposed 2009-2010 budget has mainly focused on the betterment of farmers, labourers and all of the mass people. "The budget will expedite development of the mass people," she hoped.

She made the remarks while inaugurating a three-month 'Tree Plantation Programme 1416' on the premises of her official residence Jamuna yesterday.

The Prime Minister planted three saplings - Tamal, Litchi and Kurchi (Holarrhena Pubescent) on the Jamuna premises to inaugurate the countrywide afforestation campaign.

Bangladesh Krishak League, an associate organisation of the ruling Awami League, will operate the plantation programme.

Acting president of the Krishak League MA Odud and General Secretary Motahar Hossain Mullah presented the prime

minister with crests.

The prime minister, as a token, handed over one sapling to the representative of every division and asked them to spread the tree-plantation movement across the country.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman initiated the plantation movement in 1973 on the first day of the Bangla month Ashar.

Referring to the previous AL government-sponsored 'One Home, One Farm' project, the prime minister said the present government wants to turn every home into one production centre of daily foods like vegetables and fish.

"We can build a prosperous country through flourishing the small and cottage industries, and every home of the country can be turned into a production unit," she said.

She focused on the high quality of local fruits, vegetables and meats, and said food-processing industries can be established and the processed foods exported to foreign markets after meeting the local demand.

Describing the importance of trees in protecting the country from natural

calamities like storms and tidal surge, the prime minister urged all to plant trees across the coastal areas and on the banks of the rivers.

Trees need to be planted on the embankments to create a forest net around the coastal belt, she said.

The prime minister said Awami League always attaches the highest importance to agriculture, as this is the backbone of Bangladesh's economy.

She said Bangladesh for the first time was turned into a food-sufficient country during the last Awami League government. "But, unfortunately, the subsequent BNP government had again made Bangladesh a food deficit country."

"But, inshallah, we will again make Bangladesh a food-sufficient country," she said.

Sheikh Hasina, also the AL president, urged the party leaders and workers to stand by the people who voted the party to power.

"By brining us in power, countrymen have reposed a great duty on us to serve the nation. And my party colleagues can play a vital role in implementing our election pledges," she said.



Prof Muzaffer Ahmad speaks at a seminar on 'Tipaimukh dam: Responsibilities of Bangladesh' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left is Prof Tareq Shamsur Rahman and on his right are Abdul Quaiyum Chowdhury and Mohammad Asaf-ud-Daula. Surma Kushiara Meghna Bachao Adnolan organised the seminar. (Story on Page 16)

## Tk 40,000 looted from restaurant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of criminals looted Tk 40,000 from a restaurant after entering there in guise of customers in the city's Dhanmondi-27 area last night.

They also beat up seven customers and two staffs of the restaurant named 'Jhal'.

Witnesses said five-armed youths came to the restaurant at around 10:00pm in a private car. At one stage, they started beating the customers of the restaurant indiscriminately to create panic.

Holding them at gunpoint, the criminals looted the money from the cashbox of the restaurant and fled the scene.

## Put pressure on developed world to provide promised aid

### Food minister urges developing countries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Food and Disaster Management Minister Dr Abdur Razzaque in a global forum in Cairo yesterday urged the developing countries to put pressure on the developed world to provide the promised aid -- 0.7 percent of their GDP.

"I would urge this enlightened forum to put motivational pressure on the developed countries that have failed to fulfill their commitment for providing 0.7 percent of their GDP as aid to developing countries," he said while speaking at a plenary session.

The World Bank organised

the conference titled 'Global South South Forum; Learning on Fuel, Food and Financial Crisis' in Egypt attended by over 100 countries, mainly the developing ones, said a release yesterday.

He also appealed to the international community to provide Bangladesh with trade financing on liberal terms for importing essential commodities like food, fertiliser and fuel. Bangladesh manages its external sector prudently and does not default on any debt and hence must be provided with trade financing on liberal terms, Dr Razzaque told the forum.

The minister described the

shocks that Bangladesh faced floods, cyclone Sidr, price hikes and lately the cyclone Aila, and said the government took many social safety net programmes to ease the sufferings of the extremely poor, but frequent disasters in the recent years remain as threats to the poor people.

Apart from a high concentration of people around the absolute poverty line, about 25 percent people live in extreme poverty, while there is increasing income inequality, which implies that the vulnerable people are under constant threat to falling into poverty and become food insecure following shocks of natural

disasters.

Dr Abdur Razzaque said it is a must to enhance monitoring and evaluation of the programmes taken by the government to bring people out of vulnerability.

"We urge all development partners to come up with increased support to raise the programme effectiveness and help implement new programmes," he said.

"Let's not use our productive land to produce bio-fuel rich crops, rather interested countries may use the fallow land for that purpose. Let's preserve our soil, water and air for our future generation," Dr Razzaque said.



Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Ayesha Khanam speaks at a press conference demanding new law banning fatwa (religious edict) at its office at Sufia Kama Bhawan in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 3)

## New Indonesian envoy calls on Dipu Moni

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Newly appointed Ambassador of Indonesia Zet Mirzal Zainuddin called on Foreign Minister Dipu Moni at her office yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed issues related to development cooperation, climate change, global warming, Rohingya issue, trade and investment, combating terrorism and cultural exchange.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni recalled her fruitful meeting with the Indonesian Foreign Minister Dr N Hasan Wirajuda during the Bali Conference.

She 'told' the Indonesian envoy that the existing trade gap might be narrowed down through increased Indonesian investment in Bangladesh and removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers.

She said Indonesia could consider export of coal to Bangladesh for generating electricity.

On the other hand, it could import various items like jute and jute products, leather and leather goods, shrimps, specialised textile and ready-made garments and pharmaceuticals from Bangladesh.

The foreign minister informed the Ambassador that Bangladesh produces high quality pharmaceutical products, which are being exported to many of the Asian and European countries.

Ambassador Zain-uddin informed the foreign minister that the next meeting of the Joint Commission between Bangladesh and Indonesia will be held in Indonesia.

## Form all-party body to probe misdeeds of caretaker govt Says Moudud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP leader Moudud Ahmed yesterday called on the government to constitute an all-party committee to investigate the misdeeds of the immediate past caretaker government.

Terming Dr Fakhuruddin Ahmed-led caretaker government illegal and unconstitutional, he also demanded trial of just-retired army chief Gen Moeen U Ahmed, former adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) MA Matin, former Anti-Corruption Commission chairman Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury, Maj Gen Masud Uddin Chowdhury, Maj Gen (ret'd) ATM Amin and Brig Gen Fazlul Bari.

Moudud, also a former law minister, made the call at a press briefing at his Motijheel chamber in the city.

"Initiative should be taken so that those who were responsible for 1/11 change-over cannot leave the country and those who are now abroad should be brought back," said Moudud, who had been arrested by the joint forces on different charges during the emergency.

## Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Md Wajedul Islam Bachchu, chairman of Puthia Upazila, Rajshahi, and president of Bangladesh Union Parishad Forum (BUPF), Rajshahi unit, was killed in a road accident on Saturday at Chhoto Senbhag, says a press release. He was 45.

The accident took place when he was going back to Rajshahi after attending the national seminar of BUPF on the day.

BUPF President Mahbubur Rahman Tutul and General Secretary Ataharul Islam Bulbul, in a statement yesterday, expressed deep shock at the death of Bachchu and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family.

## Jorge Das

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Jorge Das, a freedom fighter and trainer of Hamja Freedom Fighters Training Camp, passed away due to old-age complications yesterday at the age of 72, family members said.

He left behind his wife, two daughters, one son, and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

His funeral will be held at Missionary Christian Graveyard in Dinajpur Sadar upazila this morning with state honour.

## Abdul Matin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abdul Matin, a senior reporter of the daily Share Biz Korcha, passed away yesterday, says a press release.

He was buried at Gopibagh graveyard in the city.

Economic Reporters' Forum president Nazmul Ahsan and general secretary Sajjad Alam Khan expressed deep shock at the death of Matin.

## Jahura Bibi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jahura Bibi, mother of Sirajul Islam, general secretary of Agrani Bank Employees Union, passed away due to old-age complications at her home yesterday at the age of 95, says a press release.

## Primary teachers call to end discrimination

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Non-Government Primary Teachers' Association yesterday demanded amendments to all government circulars which, they claimed, are discriminatory.

Expressing resentment over the government decision of making the government primary schools' management cost double by keeping the cost of non-government primary schools the same as previous years, it alleged that the government is broadening the discrimination by arranging additional facilities only for the government schoolteachers.

At a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium, the association leaders threatened that they would declare a tough movement on June 28 if their 10-point demand is not met.

The demands include nationalisation of jobs of all the non-government teachers, amendment to notifications regarding the posts of non-government headmasters and their salary scales, ensuring

100 percent remuneration, providing timescale, annual increment and other allowances in line with the scale for the government schoolteachers and introduction of retirement allowance.

The association leaders said they want an end to such discrimination, and demanded equal facilities for all the primary schoolteachers.

President of the association Aminul Islam Chowdhury read out a written speech at the programme.

## JP (Manju) nat'l council Oct 24

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The national council of Jatiya Party (JP-Manju) will be held on October 24 with a view to amending the constitution of the party.

The decision came at a presidium meeting of the party chaired by JP Chairman Anwar Hossain Manju at a city hotel on Saturday, says a press release.



## Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at a few places over all the six divisions with moderately heavy falls at places in the next 12 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 6:48pm today and rises at 5:11am tomorrow.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 37.0 degree Celsius was recorded at Rajshahi and the lowest of 23.0 degree at Chuadanga.

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

| City/Town   | Temperature in Celsius |      | Humidity in percentage |         |
|-------------|------------------------|------|------------------------|---------|
|             | Max                    | Min  | Morning                | Evening |
| Dhaka       | 35.5                   | 27.4 | 76                     | 68      |
| Chittagong  | 32.7                   | 26.8 | 77                     | 77      |
| Rajshahi    | 37.0                   | 25.0 | 73                     | 62      |
| Khulna      | 36.3                   | 25.5 | 84                     | 65      |
| Barisal     | 35.0                   | 28.0 | 81                     | 70      |
| Sylhet      | 29.7                   | 23.5 | 90                     | 89      |
| Cox's Bazar | 34.0                   | 26.8 | 70                     | 77      |

## Ctg mayor hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury was admitted to a private clinic here yesterday following acute chest pains and other complications.

Sources said the mayor was brought to a diagnostic centre in the morning for an ultrasonography test where he felt the pains. The doctors suggested him getting admitted into a hospital.

He was then hospitalised at an adjoining clinic and was undergoing treatment till filing of this report at around 5:00pm.

A six-member medical board led by endocrinologist Prof Salek Mollah was formed to examine the condition of the mayor, sources added.

CCC Chief Medical Officer Dr Selim Akhter Chowdhury said the mayor had been suffering from chest pains and abdominal discomfort for the last few days.

The condition of the mayor improved little in the afternoon, said Dr Selim, adding that they were waiting for a decision from the medical board whether he would be sent to Dhaka for having an MRI test.

Family sources said the mayor had earlier planned to go to Singapore on June 20 or 21 for treatment.

## Budget to help fight poverty, ensure social security

Say Jubo League leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The leaders of Jubo League, an associate body of the ruling Awami League, yesterday termed the proposed national budget for the fiscal year (FY) 2009-10 an investment-friendly budget which would certainly eliminate poverty and ensure social and economical security of the people.

They hailed the Sheikh Hasina-led government for undertaking several mass welfare projects aiming at the implementation of the key election pledges of the party, says a press release.

The Jubo League leaders made the remark at a meeting of the central executive committee of the organisation at its Bangabandhu Avenue office in the city.

Presiding over the meeting, Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Jubo League president and also state minister for LGRD ministry, said, "The youths will be beneficiary through the budget as the government has planned to create employment opportunity for at least 6.40 lakh people in the FY 2009-10 under the 'Employment Guarantee Scheme' and 'National Service Scheme'."

He hoped that the government would start implementation of the budget, especially the

proposed annual development programme (ADP), from next month.

Appreciating the government decision to set the clock 1 hour ahead as part of its daytime saving time (DST) scheme, Nanak said it would save at least 300-megawatt electricity every day which will contribute to vibrant growth of the country's economy.

The meeting has chalked out a number of programmes, including advertisements in different newspapers and TV channels focusing the positive aspects of setting the clock one hour ahead on June 19, bringing mass awareness rallies at all upazilas and districts on June 17 and in Dhaka city on June 18.

The meeting also took a decision to participate in the national tree plantation project across the country to fight the climate change impacts as well as to ensure food security of the countrymen.

The leaders and activists pledged to plant at least one sapling around their respective homesteads to encourage people to make the tree plantation projects successful.

Lawmaker Mirza Azam, general secretary of the organisation and also whip of the house, also addressed the meeting, among others.

## Death anniversary

METRO DESK

Today is the 11th death anniversary of Mahmudul Hoque Chowdhury, a freedom fighter and former senior sub-editor of The Bangladesh Observer, says a press release.

Qurankhwani and milad mahfil will be held at his village home at Matigodha in Chhagalnaiya, Feni.

Quadrangle and milad mahfil will be held at his village home at Matigodha in Chhagalnaiya, Feni.

Quadrangle and milad mahfil will be held at his village home at Matigodha in Chhagalnaiya, Feni.

## Convocation

The first convocation of Uttara University will be held. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 12:00noon.

## Review meeting

Unnayan Shamunnay organises a review meeting on the proposed national budget. Venue: Sheraton Hotel. Time: 10:30am.

## Concluding ceremony

The concluding ceremony of fruit fair 2009 will be held. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 5:30pm.

## Seminar

Prantik Manusher Sanghota organises a seminar on security of food and life for 'Prantik' people and role of the state. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.

## Costly RPCL deal drains out \$25m

FROM PAGE 1

repair services and refurbishment. Back in 2001, during the period when the RPCL had signed a series of costly and secretive deals on the basis of unsolicited negotiations to favour a certain businessman, it had signed a 15-year LTSA with Dutch company Thomassen and Turbine System (TTS).

First phase of the contract expired in October last year costing the RPCL around \$25 million. The contract dictates that the RPCL must consider the second phase of this deal to remain in force till 2015, for which the TTS sought another \$28 million.

As this offer seemed very costly, the RPCL board checked market trend of LTSA by late last year and got two price offers from two other service companies--one demanding euro 15.7 million and the other euro 9.8 million. "These offers differed so grossly that we decided to seek

a fresh offer for LTSA through a restricted tender seeking only the original equipment manufacturer," said a RPCL official. He added that to filter out inexperienced contractors, the company made the tender restricted.

The tender was opened on June 10 and it will be closed on June 24.

An LTSA contractor's job is to inspect gas turbines of a power plant after 8,000 hours of operation, conduct gas inspection after 24,000 hours and major inspection after 48,000 hours. In addition, the contractor has to respond to any problem of the plant within 48 hours of notice.

While such work may seem necessary, the LTSA deal was made when the RPCL already had a 15-year operation and maintenance (O&M) contract with Lahmeyer International Pally Power Service (LIPPS) from 1999 to look after RPCL's two unit 140 MW power plant. Job description of the LTSA

and O&M contracts is almost identical.

Now ousted and sued, the LIPPS was also given the O&M contract on the basis of an unsolicited negotiation. Each year it drew Tk 27 crore till 2005. Now the same job carried out by the RPCL staffs costs a mere Tk 5 crore.

The nature of various such unsolicited contracts officially surfaced when the government in 2006-07 reconstituted the RPCL management, giving it the mandate to clean up its operation and end the era of massive irregularities.

RPCL's tender for repairing power unit

The RPCL last week also floated a tender for repair of one of its 35 MW GE power units in Mymensingh that abruptly broke down on June 6. The RPCL expects that this unit can be repaired within 90 days.

"This unit broke down after 55,000 hours of service because of production defect.

Previously another 35 MW GE power unit broke down similarly in January 2006. We know that a similar GE power unit of the Power Development Board's Shahjibazar plant broke down twice," said a high official.

The RPCL will send for repair the unit that broke down in January 2006, which is being preserved. The unit was replaced by purchasing a brand new one.

"The unit that broke down on June 6 has remained untouched as our insurer--Sadhara Bima Corporation--has not given us clearance for inspecting it to find out exactly why it broke down," the official said.

This disruption however did not affect the RPCL's power production. Though it could generate up to 210 MW power when everything was alright, the plant has been producing around 110 MW at best due to inadequate gas supply.