

Take steps to generate wind, solar energy

JS body urges power ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary standing committee yesterday asked the power and energy ministry for taking an immediate initiative to generate wind and solar-based electricity as alternative sources of power.

The standing body on power and energy ministry also asked the ministry to assess the 400 megawatt wind-based power generation project at Patenga by Sweden and to take a decision soon.

The parliamentary watchdog body also asked the ministry to finalise the national coal policy as soon as possible for utilisation of coal in production of electricity.

"We have asked the ministry to take measures to generate wind and solar-based electricity due to gas crisis," Shubid Ali Bhuiyan, chairman of the standing committee, told reporters after the meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan.

"Sweden, Germany and some other countries are generating huge amount of power using solar and wind sources, if they can do, why not we when we have both the sources," he added.

"Sweden gets sunlight for only three hours, while we get 12-13 hours. We, therefore, have the huge potential to generate power using wind," Shubid said.

The committee chief said around 850MW of electricity would be added to

the national power grid by this year.

He further said that 33,000 illegal electricity lines have been disconnected across the country in a special drive from July 1 to 16.

The meeting also inquired about the progress of the parliamentary subcommittee which is investigating irregularities and corruption that had taken place in power sector during the past BNP-Jamaat regime.

Standing committee members -- State Minister for Power and Energy Shamsul Huq Tuku, Abdul Matin Khasru, M Abdul Kader Khan, Enamul Huq, Mojibur Rahman Fakir and Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh -- were present at the meeting.



Tajuddin's 84th anniversary of birth today

METRO DESK

Today is the 84th birth anniversary of Tajuddin Ahmad, the first prime minister of Bangladesh, says a press release.

Tajuddin Ahmad was born at Dardaria village under Kapiasia upazila in Gazipur on this day in 1925.

One of the architects of the country's independence, Tajuddin Ahmad was involved in politics from his student life. He played a key role during all the anti-communalism movements after 1947, including the Language Movement in 1952.

He was one of the main initiators in the formation of Awami League in 1949. He was also involved in formulating six-point movement in 1966.

The best achievement of his life was to play a pioneering role against Pakistan by forming the government for Bangladesh in 1971 in absence of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Tajuddin was brutally killed inside the jail with three other national leaders in 1975.

On the occasion, a week-long photo exhibition on his life and works will begin at Liberation War Museum today.

DEATH OF HENA DAS CPB observes mourning day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) will observe mourning day across the country today to pay tributes to veteran leader of women's rights and leftist movement Hena Das, says a press release.

On the occasion, CPB leaders and activists would wear black badges and black flags would be hoisted and the party flags be kept at half-mast at its offices.

2 BCL leaders released

DU CORRESPONDENT

Two central leaders of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) were released from jail yesterday.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested BCL Organising Secretary Ashrafur Rahman and International Affairs Secretary Sohel Rana Mithu on April 12 from the city on charge of disrupting academic atmosphere at Dhaka University (DU) and making trouble in BCL.

Ashraf and Mithu were arrested during an internal conflict in the organisation that had prompted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to step down from the post of BCL's organising chief.

Several hundred BCL workers received them at the Dhaka central jail gate with flowers and went to the DU campus in a motorcade.

Ashraf and Mithu were sent to jail with a one month detention. Later, their detention was extended. They told reporters that the charge on which they were arrested was false and it was a conspiracy against them by a vested quarter.

NEW EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS MPO registration to start soon

Says PM's adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A policy to bring new educational institutions under monthly payment order (MPO) would be formulated within the first week of September, said Prime Minister's Education, Social Development and Political Affairs Adviser Dr Alauddin Ahmed yesterday.

"The MPO registration of new educational institutions would start soon after the formulation of the policy," he told reporters at the education ministry after a meeting on the issue.

The adviser said the government formed a ten-member committee headed by himself to formulate a concrete policy for MPO allocation and enlistment of new educational institutions on June 11.

The committee in its

second meeting yesterday discussed different inconsistencies and problems of the existing policy and also submitted their primary observations and recommendations on the existing policy for providing MPO to private educational institutions.

After the meeting, Dr Alauddin said there would be no room for corruption and harassment in registering private educational institutions under MPO.

"Those, who will fulfil the criteria, will be registered," he added.

Replying to a question, he said the entire registration process would be kept out of political considerations and influence, a common complaint prevalent so long.

The adviser also said they would formulate a clear, integrated and time-worthy policy.

Money laundering case against Mirza Abbas quashed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday quashed all proceedings of a money laundering case against former BNP lawmaker Mirza Abbas.

The police filed the case against Abbas in February 2007 on charges of illegally possessing huge local and foreign currencies at his Motijheel residence.

A HC bench of Justice AKM Asaduzzaman and Justice Md Rezaul Hasan delivered the judgement following a quashment petition filed by the former lawmaker.

Additional Attorney General AKM Zahurul Haque told The Daily Star yesterday that the government would file an appeal with the Supreme Court against the HC judgement.

Advocate Ahsanul Karim, counsel for Abbas, said that the HC quashed the proceedings against his client on the grounds that the police did not take permission from any authorised bank before filing the case.

Taking permission from Bangladesh Bank or any authorised bank is mandatory as per provisions of the law, he said, adding that the police even did not issue any show cause notice to Abbas before filing the case. On February 4 in 2007, the law enforcers seized 4,600 US dollars, 17,000 baht, 418 Singaporean dollars and 432 Malaysian ringgits from his South Shahjahanpur residence at Motijheel, according to the case statement.

Bangla Bhai's accomplice arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The police arrested a suspected accomplice of executed Jama'at-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) leader Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai from a slum in the city yesterday.

Gulshan police arrested Mohammad Mitu of Boalia upazila in Rajshahi from Korail Basti around 11:30am.

After preliminary interrogation, he was handed over to the detective branch (DB) of police in the evening.

Zahid made acting secy of bridge div

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday appointed Md Zahid Hossain, additional secretary of the Cabinet Division, as acting secretary of the Bridge Division, says an official hand-out.

DHAKA TODAY

DCCI workshop

DCCI organises a workshop on legal aspects of ITO export programme 2008-12. Venue: DCCI auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

Report sharing session

A multi-stakeholders sharing session on the draft report on the education watch on reinvestigating quality of primary education will be held. Venue: BIDS auditorium. Time: 4:00pm.

Workshop

SME Foundation organises a workshop on 'Encouraging women entrepreneurs Access to finance'. Venue: SME Foundation office. Time: 3:00pm.



German Ambassador Frank Meyke calls on Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office in the city yesterday.

Cabinet

FROM PAGE 15

in its single block. Tullow presently produces 100 million cubic feet gas per day from Bangura gas field in the country.

Petrobangla had recommended awarding all these nine blocks to these two companies following evaluation of their proposals.

However, due to maritime boundary disputes with India and Myanmar, Conoco's bid has now been cut down to two blocks only.

On May 14, Conoco's vice-president in a letter informed the government that most of the blocks it had proposed for overlap the maritime boundary claim by Myanmar and suggested that at the first level the government may award it with blocks that did not overlap the Myanmar territory.

After the cabinet approves this proposal, Petrobangla will negotiate with the two companies for signing separate production sharing contracts (PSCs).

The model PSC in this connection was finalised last year following consultation with PSC experts Kamal Hossain and Pedor van Meurs. This PSC keeps Bangladesh Arbitration Act, 2001 for solving disputes between the PSC signatories, instead of the option for an international court.

While suffering from ever-increasing gas crisis, Bangladesh has never explored its deep sea for oil and gas before. India discovered a staggering 100 trillion cubic feet of gas reserve in the Bay and Myanmar seven trillion cubic feet of gas reserve.

Hasina seeks German help

FROM PAGE 1

"Germany as a big producer of renewable energy with advanced technology and expertise stands in a unique position to support Bangladesh in its dire need of tapping all sources of renewable energy. Bangladesh expects Germany will assist in a big way in the field," Hasina said.

PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed newsmen after the meeting.

Hasina also called for more German investment in various development sectors of Bangladesh.

The outgoing ambassador assured the prime minister of continued German support to Bangladesh in attaining sustainable development.

The PM said Bangladesh attached high importance to her relations with Germany considering as a major development partner of the country.

She stated that the people of Bangladesh recall with deep gratitude the invaluable support of the then German government to the provisional government of Bangladesh during the 1971 liberation war and that Germany was the first country in Europe to recognise independent Bangladesh.

The premier thanked the German government and other European development partners for their support and

FROM PAGE 1

charge of Gulshan Police Station to submit the enquiry report by August 8.

Tarek filed the case on July 16, naming seven persons including Mahbubul Islam, owner of the house on Road-41 in Gulshan-2 where the firms were housed, and his wife Farhana Islam.

In his petition, he said Adcom Limited, Signage and Megavision and a few other associated firms have been doing business with fame at that building following a five-year agreement on using the building with Farhana Islam on March 31, 2002.

"Since construction of the building was not complete, the accused gave a verbal commitment to extend the deal for another five years. Upon the commitment, the tenant gave her Tk 39 lakh in cash, but she did not renew the agreement," said the complainant.

Tarek said the two sides meantime got involved in a legal battle over the matter and the tenant started paying the house rent to the court.

"This enraged the owners of the house and they cut off the supply lines of gas, water and electricity of the house. They also filed a case, bringing some false allegations against the tenants. Being directed by the court, Gulshan police conducted an enquiry and found the allegations baseless," he said.

He said the owners filed a no-confidence petition with the court which was rejected

and the matter is still under trial. He said on July 2 the accused filed a case with Gulshan Police Station against the tenants on charge of forcibly occupying the house.

"Nazim Kamran, Geetara Safiya and other family members came to learn that about 60-70 people were looting the offices of their business firms. Nazim Kamran, Mukim Chowdhury and Adit rushed to Gulshan Police Station to file a case about the looting but the police arrested them," Tarek said, adding that the accused beat employees of the companies and forced them to leave the house.

Nazim Kamran was later released on bail.

Tarek alleged that the accused along with 60-70 unidentified people ransacked all the offices of the firms and later brought 10 trucks and pick-up vans to take away valuable furniture, electronic goods and machines worth at least Tk 15 crore and other documents.

He also alleged that the attackers took signatures of some employees on a white paper and stamps. They also forced the employees to sign a statement that said the business establishments themselves took away the valuables willingly.

Tarek alleged that they failed to file a case in this regard with Gulshan Police Station. He urged the court to take necessary actions against the accused persons.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Md Golam Mostafa, administrative officer of Department of Philosophy, Dhaka University, passed away due to cancer at Green Life Hospital in the city on Monday at the age of 59, says a press release.

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

His Quikhwani will be held at his residence in Savar after Juma prayers tomorrow.

Mokbul Ahmed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mokbul Ahmed, a social worker and president of Noakhali District Somity, passed away at his residence on Monday at the age of 98, says a press release.

He left behind his three sons and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

Noakhali District Somity expressed deep shock at his death and conveyed sympathy to his bereaved family members.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 10th death anniversary of journalist Ahmed Humayun, says a press release.

Ahmed Humayun was a pioneer of the movements of the journalists in the country. He also served as the president of the Bangladesh Federal Journalists Union (BFUJ) from 1978 to 1983.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held and food will be distributed among the destitute.

BFUJ President Ruhul Amin Gazi, Secretary General MA Aziz, DUJ President Abdus Shaheed, General Secretary Md Baker Hossain in a statement prayed for salvation of the departed soul.

Chehlum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chehlum of Prof Abdur Rashid, former principal of Chittagong Teachers' Training

College, will be held at his residence in the city after Juma prayers tomorrow, says a press release.

Relatives and admirers are requested to attend the programme and pray for eternal peace of his departed soul.

Ferdous Ara Chowdhury

METRO DESK

Chehlum of Ferdous Ara Chowdhury, wife of late Syed Ahmed Chowdhury, a politician and social

worker of Fenil, will be held tomorrow (July 24), says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa and milad mahfil will be held at her village home at Sonagazi tomorrow and at Fenil on July 25.

Relatives and admirers are requested to pray for salvation of her departed soul.

Ferdous Ara passed away due to old age complications at LabAid Cardiac Hospital at Dhanmondi in the city in the early hours of July 14 at the age of 82.



No change in temperature

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at many places over all the six divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

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

The sun sets in the capital at 7:46pm today and rises at 6:24am tomorrow.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 34.6 degrees Celsius was recorded at Sylhet and the lowest of 24.4 degrees at Sakthira.

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	32.7	27.5	79	89
Chittagong	30.2	25.5	88	83
Rajshahi	32.8	26.6	86	83
Khulna	32.0	26.0	96	83
Barisal	31.3	25.6	97	79
Sylhet	34.6	25.8	80	92
Cox's Bazar	31.2	25.4	96	90

Thousands watch long solar eclipse

FROM PAGE 1

Over 50,000 visitors and local enthusiasts cheered frantically as the totality instantly cast a veil of complete darkness at exactly 7:56am. But there were thousands of others who confined themselves in their houses, gripped by the myths about solar eclipses.

The spectacular show of nature lasted for three minutes and 58 seconds in Panchagarh. Scientists had predicted that Madhupara village of Haribhanga union in the district would have the clearest view of the eclipse.

However, clouds created a hindrance to the eager viewers--men, women and children who never looked away from the sky.

The eclipse lasted for as much as six minutes and 39 seconds at some places of the world and this duration will not be surpassed until June 13, 2132.

The next total solar eclipse to be visible from Bangladesh will occur on June 3, 2114.

A Hindu devotee of Madhupara village said according to Hindu fables, the eclipse is caused by a dragon-demon swallowing the sun.

But astronomers have a less threatening explanation, saying the orbital mechanics are just right for the moon to cover the sun completely casting a shadow on the Earth.

Brajendra Nath Roy, a villager from Deviganj upazila who came a long way to witness the event, said he and his companions were apprehensive of the cloudy weather, but it was still a unique experience to see "morning turning into night" for more than three minutes.

Rooms at all hotels in Panchagarh town had been booked weeks ago. The local administration opened up all its dormitories for the tourists from across the country. It appealed to residents of the district to open up their doors to the visitors.

The local stadium has been a centre for cultural activities for the last two days. Residents said they had never seen any

thing like this since the Liberation War in 1971.

Away from the town, hundreds of people camped at different tea gardens towards Tentulia to watch the eclipse. About 100 members of Bangladesh Astronomical Association camped at Molnaguri Tea Estate, 30km north of Panchagarh.

With dawn breaking at 5:30am, men and women lined up on a hill and waited for the moon to pass across the sun. As the clock approached eight o'clock an eerie silence engulfed the area. Suddenly the daylight started to disappear and a cool breeze began to blow. Birds flying overhead changed their direction, crickets chirped even louder as the eclipsed sun disappeared behind the round black shadow of the moon within seconds and darkness fell.

The totality of the eclipse was visible from cities like Surat, Varanasi, Patna, Thimphu, Chengdu, Hangzhou and Shanghai, and the Three Gorges Dam. A partial eclipse was seen from the

much broader path of the moon's penumbra, including most of South East Asia and north-eastern Oceania.

A "total solar eclipse observation committee" was formed with Bishwa Sahitya Kendra, Liberation War Museum, Chhayanaut's educational initiative Nalanda, Samannito Shiksha-Sangskriti, Bangladesh Nature Study and Conservation Union, and Cosmic Culture to observe the eclipse. Science initiative Discussion Project coordinated the committee, which set up the main observation camp at Madhupara village and another at the South Plaza of Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan in Dhaka, said a press release.

With the help of BRB Cable Industries Ltd, the committee also set up observation camps at Bell's Park in Barisal, Akimuddin Library in Chapainawabganj, science and technology university campuses in Syedpur and Gazipur, Jahangirnagar University and Araj Ali Matubbar library at Dania in Dhaka.