

Record 63 bids for rental power

Most bidders new; contracts next month; PDB commits power delivery from March

SHARIEF KHAN

The Power Development Board (PDB) yesterday received a record number of 63 proposals for eight rental power projects totalling 530 megawatt in capacity, set to start being launched the next summer.

PDB Chairman Alamgir Kabir told The Daily Star that his organisation aims to sign the agreements with successful bidders within the next month, so that four diesel fired plants could start launching operations from March next, and four

heavy fuel oil (HFO) fired plants may start launching from next August.

The expected tariff for power from diesel plants totalling 250MW in capacity is around Tk 14 per kilowatt hour while from HFO plants around Tk 5.

Such an unusually high response to the bid invitation does not however necessarily reflect quality bids from power companies which would actually be able to deliver the plants, sources said.

PDB had sold 117 bid documents for the tender -- which is yet another record.

The larger share of bidders represents local new faces with no real experience in installing rental power plants, the sources said. But that also goes to show the tremendous interest local investors have in the power sector. Only three or four foreign rental power companies participated in the bid.

The sources said some aggressive entrepreneurs submitted bids for most of the projects, using different signboards. Based on its past bitter experience of

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SC clears Babar's remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday directed the investigation officer of the August 21 grenade attack case to take former state minister for home affairs Lutfozzaman Babar on a five-day remand.

First Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Ehsanul Haque passed the order vacating his earlier stay order on remand.

The court came up with the order after receiving a Supreme Court order. The SC stayed a HC order, which directed the authorities concerned to interrogate Babar at the jail gate, for seven days.

Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division Justice

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Tk 3,684cr interest waived in 8yrs

Such practice of state banks, financial institutions fuels unethical activities: BB

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Nine public sector banks and financial institutions in the last eight years waived a staggering amount of Tk 3,684 crore interest on loans against 693 accounts, which the central bank thinks encourages 'unethical activities' in many fields.

Bangladesh Bank (BB) disclosed this in a report that also said if any borrower is affected due to genuine causes, in that case formulation of an exit policy for bringing the borrower out of loan burden may be logical.

The central bank placed the report yesterday at a meeting of the Executive Committee

of National Economic Council (Nec) as the prime minister wanted to know about waiver of interest in the last 7-8 years.

After the meeting, Planning Minister AK Khandker told journalists that the matter was not discussed at the meeting. The finance ministry would take necessary steps in this regard.

The BB report said waiving interest is a very sensitive issue. Giving such privilege hampers normal loan recovery process. Avoiding waiver of loan as far as possible is better.

It also said, if necessary, a genuinely affected borrower may be helped by giving scope for

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Future trial of BDR under army act

Govt to notify soon

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

The government is planning to issue a gazette notification stating that any future mutiny and other offences in paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) will be tried under the army act.

Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder confirmed The Daily Star that the matter has been under the government's consideration.

Meanwhile, highly placed sources said the government already drafted the gazette and will finalise its content today at a meeting in the law minister's official residence.

The move came as the BDR headquarter in its recent proposal to the home ministry had said the gazette notification is very necessary prior to the start of the trial process of the recent mutineers, which is likely to start early next month.

In the proposal, the BDR headquarter said the notification will help boost the morale of the command structure at all levels of the force, and the upcoming trial of the recent mutineers will also be benefited.

Sources said today's meeting is expected to be attended by Law Minister Shafique Ahmed, Commerce Minister Faruk Khan who is coordinating the BDR reformation process on behalf of the Prime Minister's Office, Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder, Law Secretary Kazi Habibul Awal, BDR Director General Maj Gen Mainul Islam, and legal experts.

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Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan goes airborne to pull one for four during his majestic 105 not out against Zimbabwe in the second one-day international at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur last night.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Tigers roar back to draw level

SPORTS REPORTER

Left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak claimed a five-for and captain cool Shakib Al Hasan hammered a magnificent unbeaten century as Bangladesh levelled the five-match one-day series against Zimbabwe 1-1 after winning the second match by seven wickets at the floodlit Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

It was a roaring return by the Tigers at the venue where they lost the opening match so embarrassingly two days ago against their South African rivals. And fittingly, the chief entertainer in a thumping victory was Shakib, whose rampant 105 not out off 69 balls confirmed that Bangladesh toppled a modest total of 219 with a massive 20.3 overs to spare.

While Shakib, who has been a revelation ever since he took over the captaincy, kept the home fans on their toes with brilliant stroke-play in the second half of the contest, it was a miserly Razzak who made sure the visitors stumbled after a flying start with his turn and bounce. The slow left-armer, who threw caution to the wind in the first game with three wickets in his first over, this time finished with fantastic figures of 9.2-0-29-5 to win the man-of-the-match award ahead of his captain.

Zimbabwe started from where they had left off in the opening match with their openers Hamilton Masakadza (34) and Chamu Chibhabha (39) taking the toothless and erratic Bangladesh pace attack to the cleaners. The pair produced 59 runs in 11 overs before off-spinner Naeem Islam broke the partnership by having a sweeping Hamilton Masakadza plumb in front.

Razzak started the carnage with a beauty that caught Zimbabwe's top batsman Brendan Taylor clueless against a delivery that pitched on the leg stump and turned to take off the off stump's bail.

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Bomb hoax

Unknown callers threaten to blow up 2 tax offices

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two hoax cellphone calls threatening of bomb blasts yesterday prompted the law enforcers to carry out extensive searches for explosives at the offices of National Board of Revenue (NBR) at Segunbagicha and Taxes Zone-8 at Bijoy Nagar in the capital.

Police officials and members of Rab and detective branch conducted the hour-long search in and around the two buildings but found no explosives, said Officer-in-Charge Shibli Noman of Ramna Police Station.

NBR Deputy Secretary Mohammad Sirajul Islam, who got the first ring, said, "I received a call around 3:23pm and the anonymous caller told me that his men set five time bombs around my office to explode during the office hours."

The man said it would be a revenge attack as their leader Mufti Hannan was going to be

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Tough action against tender manipulators

2 ministers warn

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two senior ministers yesterday warned that stern action would be taken against tender manipulators, land grabbers, extortionists and other criminals irrespective of their political identities.

Local Government and Rural Development Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam and Home Minister Sahara issued the warning while briefing journalists after a meeting of the cabinet committee on law and

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ATTACK ON TAPOSH AL MPs demand stern punishment of culprits

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling Awami League (AL) lawmakers yesterday in parliament accused BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami of joining hands with the killers of Bangabandhu, and of engaging together in a conspiracy to destabilise the country in a bid to regain power illegally.

They demanded that the government identifies the perpetrators and patrons of the recent bomb attack on AL MP Fazle Noor Taposh, and metes out exemplary punishments, as the lives of all lawmakers are in danger since the incident.

In the face of demands of ruling party lawmakers who raised the issue on a point of order, Deputy Speaker Shawkat Ali, who

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Rejoinder, our reply

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami has protested some information in The Daily Star's October 26 report headlined 'Aug 21 attack on Hasina, AL rally/It was Hawa Bhaban Plot'.

In a rejoinder, it disputed that one of its top leaders attended the Hawa Bhaban meeting where the plot to kill Sheikh Hasina was finalised.

The party also refuted that 15 Jamaat men took part in the grenade attack at the AL rally on Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21, 2004.

"Presence of a high-level leader of Jamaat-e-Islami in

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CLIMATE CHANGE PM for UN body to monitor impacts

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called for forming an international committee through United Nations to oversee the impacts of climate change on different countries and expedite the efforts for rehabilitating the victims of global warming.

She made the proposal while talking to visiting French Minister for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Planning Jean-Louis Borloo at her office yesterday.

The minister during the meeting conveyed French President Nicolas Sarkozy's "special greetings and respects" to Sheikh Hasina, her

press secretary Abul Kalam Azad said after the meeting.

In reply, the Bangladesh prime minister also conveyed her respects to the French president.

Sheikh Hasina, who is also vocal in various global forums for a coordinated global combat against the hazards of climate change, emphasised united global effort to tackle the challenges from the climate change caused by excessive greenhouse gas emissions.

Hasina told the French minister though her government planned a climate-change fund worth US\$ 100 million, it would not be sufficient to face its impacts.

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\$5.4m climate adaptation project launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government along with United Nations Development Programme launched yesterday the first ever climate change adaptation project of \$5.4 million at the city's Ban Bhaban in Agargaon.

At the workshop organised by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Department of Forests and UNDP Bangladesh, the four-year long "Community-based adaptation to climate change through coastal afforestation

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BD-MYANMAR China hopes for peaceful solution to disputes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Zhang Xianyi said the disputes and disagreements between Bangladesh and Myanmar on issues like maritime boundary could be solved only by peaceful negotiation.

"There may be disputes and disagreements between the neighbours. I think the problem would be solved by peaceful negotiation," he told the journalists at the Meet the Reporters session at Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) yesterday. DRU organised the event on Bangladesh-China bilateral relations.

Quoting Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, he said there was no tension on Bangladesh-Myanmar border.

Asked whether China would agree to mediate the border disputes between

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