

Did you know?

The Rose Rotana, a 72-storey hotel in Dubai, is the world's tallest building used exclusively as a hotel. Originally, the tower was to be 380 m (1,200 ft) high, but further design modification reduced it to 333 m (1,090 ft).



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Schoolgirl killed after 'gang rape'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanjanj

A schoolgirl was strangled allegedly after rape in her residence at Sadipur in Sonargaon yesterday.

Three to four miscreants might have taken part in the killing, said Yunus Ali, acting officer-in-charge of Sonargaon Police Station. He suspects it was an incident of gangrape.

The 15-year-old girl, daughter of late Dulu Mian and Parvin Akter, was a student of class IX at Sadipur High School.

Parvin Akter lives on begging and had been managing the educational expenses of her daughter.

In the morning Parvin went out leaving her daughter

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Create more jobs

PM urges industrial sector to help close rich-poor gap, opens int'l trade fair

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the country's businessmen to help remove the income inequalities between the rich and the poor by generating job opportunities in the industrial sector.

"We need to eliminate income inequality for a balanced society. Creating more employment, the businessmen in the private sector can help end such discrimination," Hasina said while inaugurating the 15th Dhaka International Trade Fair at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

The premier asked the entrepreneurs and industrialists for diversification of both products and markets to be more competitive in the international trade and commerce. She also insisted on manufacturing goods for the domestic market.

Hasina assured the entrepreneurs of all utilities from the government to achieve the expected economic growth. "I am assuring you

that our government will give full support for industrialisation in the country," she said.

The government would set up a 1000megawatt power plant in the next year to ensure adequate supply of electricity both to household and commercial users, added the prime minister.

She encouraged the entrepreneurs to use solar panels in their offices to reduce dependency on the electricity and natural gas.

Recently, the Prime Minister's Office has started using solar panels, Hasina said.

She said in the age of globalisation the government only plays the role of a facilitator, it does not run any business venture.

In her speech, Hasina boasted the achievement of 10.31 percent export growth even in the severest economic recession in fiscal year 2008-09.

She said Bangladesh in 2008-09 exported goods worth \$15.57billion and the central bank reserve has already crossed \$10 billion mark.

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visits a pavilion at the 15th Dhaka International Trade Fair after inaugurating it yesterday.

5 POWER PROJECTS

PDB waits on power ministry's approval

SHARIER KHAN

The Power Development Board is seeking the power ministry's approval of its recommendation to award contracts for its five power projects of 320 megawatt capacity to lowest responsive bidders, a top source of the board said.

The PDB has recommended re-tendering one 200 MW project in Ghorasal as it did not attract responsive bids in the tender for 10 power plants totalling 820 MW capacity that was opened in November. The PDB is still evaluating four more bids totalling another 300 MW capacity.

In the recommendation sent to the ministry, local power company Energy Pac was found to be the lowest bidder in the five tenders. However, as per the tender's terms and conditions, Energy Pac will be awarded only two projects of its choice.

For the remaining three tenders, the second lowest bidder will be asked to match the price of

Energy Pac. If they fail to do so, the PDB will ask the third lowest bidder to match that price. If they fail, the tenders will once again be offered to Energy Pac.

Though a local company, Energy Pac has constructed several small power plants in the country in the recent years, PDB sources say.

The cost of these power projects will be between \$1,000 and \$1,400 per MW. This cost is nearly double of that of the AES Meghnaghat and Haripur gas-fired combined cycle power projects of the nineties.

"But these projects can not be compared with those projects due to several factors. First, the cost of power projects has increased in the last one decade," notes a PDB high official.

"Secondly, those were gas-fired combined cycle plants while these will be all dual fuel projects--they will have the capacity to run with both gas and oil. And thirdly, these costs include expenditure of Long Term Service Agreement (LTSA) for operation and

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GANGES, PADMA Dhaka, Delhi measuring water level

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Monitoring of water level at different points of the Ganges and the Padma has been undertaken jointly by India and Bangladesh under the GangesWater Sharing Treaty.

Every year, two joint experts committees, one in India and one in Bangladesh, record the water level for five months from January 1 to May 31.

In accordance with the treaty, Bangladesh is to get 67,650 cusecs of water every day on average in the first cycle of 10 days of January.

A four-member team led by hydrologist Abdul Hye has been to India for taking part in the measurement at two points of Farakka.

The Bangladesh team will come back after two and a half months and another team will replace them.

Another team of Bangladesh has gone to examine the water level at 10,000 feet upstream of the Padma from the Hardinge Bridge.

A two-member delegation from India comprising Deputy

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Deer not aplenty on Nijhum Dwip

Experts against decision to reduce number, want census first

NAJMUL ALAM NOBIN, back from Nijhum Dwip

The government perception of a disproportionate increase in deer population on Nijhum Dwip, the largest national park in the country, might be proved wrong, indicate wildlife experts.

A team of experts of the forest department visited the island on December 27 following the Wild Life Advisory Board's suggestion to downsize the number of deer population.

The team members suggested conducting a fresh deer census before making any decision as they spotted only two deer in the one-day visit to the forest.

Wildlife experts said the Board's decision to reduce deer population could be suicidal before knowing their exact number on the island in Noakhali.

On the basis of a 2006 deer census, the Wildlife Advisory Board in its 21st meeting

decided to reduce the number of deer on the island by allowing hunting on a limited scale.

Conservator of Forest Dr Tapan Kumar Roy said the last deer census on the island was conducted in 2006 and it had not been updated.

"We cannot make any decision hurriedly on the matter," he added.

The census said deer population in the island stood at 14,400, exceeding the island's capacity.

The Board also suggested reducing the deer population to two-thirds.

It decided to hunt down some dogs that often attack deer in the jungle. A veterinary team has already killed 10 dogs on the island from December 17 to 19, said the forest department.

Locals said deer population on the island was affected badly by cyclone Aila. Some died

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

JCD leader killed by 'BCL men' in Khulna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A Jatiyatbadi Chhatra Dal leader was killed in Khulna allegedly by a group of Chhatra League activists on Thursday.

Raihanul Islam Rabbi, 27, son of businessman Rafiqul Islam of Tootpara, succumbed to his head injuries around 12:45am while he was being taken to Dhaka for treatment.

Police and witnesses said a group of eight to 10 people attacked Rabbi while he was holding a meeting with his party-men in front of Nabarun club at Raipara under Khulna Sadar Police Station in preparation for the anniversary of JCD that was celebrated yesterday.

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PHOTO: STAR

From electrician to painter

Survived from jealousy of co-workers, Imdadul turns around his maimed life

MUKHLESUR RAHMAN

Shakespeare in his play Othello compared jealousy with a green-eyed monster. Imdadul Mallik, 30, is a victim of that green-eyed monster and he is now facing the ordeal of life but his stoic endurance helped him to live to tell the tale of vindictiveness that cost his two hands and paralysed his lower portion.

Physical impairment, however, couldn't stand in the way of once vivacious youth Imdadul nor it could prevent his youthful zeal and vigour from pursuing his dormant desire to become an artist.

Undaunted by the cruelty and brutality inflicted upon him he immersed himself in painting with the help of his mouth. He gets absorbed in his own world working on the easel sitting on a wheel

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PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST: Nothing, even the physical impairment, can stop Imdadul to live a life on his own. He now paints sitting on a wheel chair with a brush caught between his lips at the Centre for Rehabilitation of Paralysed (CRP) in Savar. Inset, his paintings are now used in greeting cards and calendars of the CRP.

Pakistan, India exchange list of nuke sites

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan and India yesterday exchanged lists of their nuclear sites under an annual accord, after a year of strained relations between the arch-rivals, Pakistan's foreign ministry said.

The New Year's Day exchange is aimed at protecting the sites in case of war and was established under a 1988 agreement on the prohibition of attacks on each other's nuclear installations.

"The governments of Pakistan and India today exchanged lists of their respective nuclear installations and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

60 killed at Pak volleyball game

US missile kills 3, another blast claims lives of 5 others

AFP, AP, Peshawar/ Mir Ali/ Khar

A suicide bomber blew up a car packed with explosives in the middle of a crowd gathered for a volleyball game in a northwest Pakistan village yesterday, killing at least 60 people.

Suicide bombings blamed on Taliban militants have surged in recent months as Islamist fighters avenge fierce military operations against them across the northwest, while Washington is urging Pakistan to do more to battle extremism.

In the small town of Shah Hasan Khan in Bannu district, which borders Taliban stronghold South Waziristan, a man detonated his

vehicle as sports fans gathered at a field to watch two local teams face off at volleyball.

"The villagers were watching the match between the two village teams when the bomber rashly drove his double-cabin pick-up vehicle into them and blew it up," district police chief Mohammad Ayub Khan told AFP.

One of his deputies Habibullah Khan said that 50 people were also wounded.

And because of security concern, the United Nations is relocating a limited number of its international staff from volatile Pakistan in the wake of bombings and extremist attacks, a spokesman said Thursday.

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Jamuna fertiliser halts for gas crisis

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Urea production at Jamuna Fertiliser Company Limited (JFCL) located at Tarakandi under Sarishabari upazila in Jamalpur abruptly came to a halt on Thursday due to acute gas crisis.

Gas crisis began to affect the production in February 2008 and since then Jamuna Fertiliser Company Limited (JFCL) has been facing 500 to 700 metric tonnes (MT) of production losses a day due to low pressure of gas, company officials said.

The situation turned from bad to worse in the last week of July the same year, they added.

If the crisis persists urea supply to 20 districts from JFCL during the peak Boro season will be seriously hampered, as only 27,000 MT of urea is available at the JFCL godown at present, they feared.

Contacted, Jahirul Hasan, general manager (production) of JFCL, told The Daily Star yesterday the production might resume at night.

"After the production was halted we informed Titas Gas as well as our higher authorities," he said, adding that the pressure of gas did not go increase as of 5:30 pm yesterday.

JFCL, the largest urea producing company in the country, has the capacity of producing 1,700 tonnes of urea a day and about 5,60,000 tonnes a year.

Six fertiliser companies in the country including JFCL can produce around 20 lakh tonnes of urea a year against a total demand of 28 lakh tonnes.

JFCL has faced closure six times in last 17 months for leakages in the highly sophisticated machinery due to abrupt fluctuations in the gas pressure, company sources said.

OnlinePoll ✓

Do you think the debate over Indian high commission's installation of own security measures like many other missions is justified?

Yes (52.6%)

No (45.3%)

No Comments (2.1%)

Total votes: 844

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think majority of the incidents of torture of journalists were the results of false news?

Yes

No

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

Prayer Timing

January 2

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-30	5-35
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation