

## Bangladesh to buy power from India at competitive price

### Steering committee meets in Dhaka next month

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh will purchase power from India at competitive price through tender. Initially, the country is likely to get 250MW of electricity from India by December 2011, a top official told BSS by phone from New Delhi yesterday.

"We need power at competitive price. As per an agreement, we will float tender to get power at cheaper rate. However, the steering committee will work on the issue," said ASM Alamgir Kabir, chairman of Power Development Board (PDB).

The joint co-ordination committee, comprising top officials of Bangladesh and India, yesterday formed the steering committee at a meeting, co-chaired by Mohammad Abul Kalam Azad, secretary of power division of Bangladesh, and Brahma, secretary for power of India, to materialise the whole package, he said.

He said the mode of purchase would be guided by the Independent Power

Purchase Policy (IPP) while National Thermal Power Company (NTPC), India would start the initial supply as per the agreement and any one can participate in the exchange programme through the state owned grid transmission company.

To fix up the modes of the whole package, the steering committee will meet in Dhaka next month, he said.

"It will be a three-day meeting of high level technical bodies of the two parties to fix details of the power exchange issue," Alamgir said. He said they have completed a pre-feasibility study on transmission networking in November last.

The exchange volume would be started from 250MW for initial period while it could eventually be as high as 1,000MW as the project cost was estimated at around 200 million US dollar. The two countries are set to exchange electricity for nearly 17 hours a day.

Both the sides agreed to exchange power during off peak hours of the day

through certain points. "We have identified at least four points for the proposed interconnection but the Iswardi-Behrampur and Asuganj-Tripura are considered to be the most viable sites for the exchange project," he said.

Bangladesh would receive the power for the national grid from India's provincial grids of West Bengal and Tripura and, if possible, offer the power to the similar lines.

He said the deal would require synchronisation of the transmission systems of the two countries as Bangladesh system is based on 232KV AC line while the Indian system is based on 400KV line.

"We will need to transform the connecting points of the two systems into high voltage DC line or (HVDC) as back-to-back link of 250MW capacity," Azad said.

Bangladesh currently faces electricity deficit of around 1,500 to 1,800MW on an average against the derated capacity of 4,500MW in 43 power plants.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) and Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in the city yesterday on strengthening the capacity of the government officials in implementing the RTI law. The photo shows MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam and BPATC Rector Md Delwar Hossain signing the MoU on behalf of their organisations. Under the MoU, BPATC will include RTI law in their foundation course from 2010 to 2012.

## Railway to procure nine locomotives

### Signs contract with Korean company

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway is going to procure nine metre-gauge diesel-electric locomotives at a cost of Tk 284 crore with a view to improving the train service.

The Bangladesh Railway (BR) and Hyundai Rotem, a Korea-based company, signed a contract to this end yesterday.

BR officials said each locomotive is priced at Tk 31.62 crore, which includes custom duty, the cost of spare parts, training and cost of service engineer.

The Economic Development Cooperation Fund of Korea will provide Tk 199 crore while the government will provide the remaining amount.

As per the agreement, the locomotives will be delivered within 24 months, but BR officials hoped that it might complete within 18 months.

The procurement is part of a project on 'Procurement of 46 locomotives' to replace worn-out engines.

The first phase of the project started in 1995. Current procurement is the final stage of the project, BR officials said.

The BR now has a fleet of 286 train engines, of which 246 are currently in use while the remaining locomotives exceeded its 20-year economic life a long time ago.

Towhidur Anwar Chowdhury, additional director general (rolling stock) of BR, and Woo Dong Ik, director of Overseas Sales, Hyundai Rotem, signed the contract in the city.

Md Belayet Hossain, director general of BR, and Khandaker Md Iftekhar Haidar, additional secretary, Ministry of Communication, were present at the contract signing ceremony.

## Indian FM calls on Hasina

BSS, New Delhi

Indian Foreign Minister S M Krishna yesterday paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her hotel suite here yesterday.

He discussed with the prime minister matters of mutual interest including terrorism, investment and trade.

The Indian FM said he has discussed with Hasina about the existing relations between the two countries and how to further strengthen cooperation in all fields.

Krishna expressed the hope that all issues could be resolved through discussions.

Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni and Foreign Secretary Mohamed Mijarul Quayes were present.

## Increase researches to boost agri production

### President urges agriculture universities

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman yesterday emphasised increasing research activities in the country's agriculture universities with a view to boosting agricultural production and meeting people's needs.

The president made the call when a delegation of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agriculture University, led by its Vice Chancellor Prof Dr M Abdul Mannan Akand, called on him at Bangabhaban.

During the meeting, Zillur also urged the delegation to invent such varieties of crops that could easily grow in the salinity-prone areas of the country's southern region.

The delegation told the president that so far they have invented some 30 new varieties of crops, including paddy, vegetables, pulses and fruits.

They said in 1991, the institute evolved two varieties of bean -- 'Baromashi Sada Seem' and 'Baromashi Beguni Seem' --

which grow round the year.

Among the new varieties of crops, BU rice-1 (2007) has become popular as it grows well in the country's Monga-prone regions of Rangpur, Kurigram and other northern districts, they said.

The delegation said they have been continuing their research works along with their regular curricular activities to increase fertility of lands.

The delegation invited the president to preside over its upcoming convocation to be held middle of March when 116 PhD, 656 masters and 82 bachelors of science degrees will be conferred on the students of the university.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agriculture University, formerly Institute of Post Graduate Studies in Agriculture (IPSA) began its journey in 1991 and later became a university in 1998.

Secretaries to the president's office were present during the meeting.

## Obituary

METRO DESK



Ishtiaque Ahmed Khan Litu, a fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society and contributor to Bangladesh paedia, died

of multiple organ failure at the Apollo Hospitals in the city on Sunday.

The youngest son of Tariqul Alam Khan, Ishtiaque was a director of TA Khan Securities Ltd and an MPhil student at the Department of Management Studies, Dhaka University at the time of his death.

Author of several books, he dealt with subject matters as varied as meter stamps of Bangladesh to academic translations on management.

He was also a member of Bangladesh Asiatic Society, Bangla Academy and the sole Bangladeshi representative to the Royal Philatelic Society.

He left behind his parents and brother Mushtaque Ahmed Khan to mourn his death.

He will be buried at city's Jurain Graveyard today.

## 'Ensure safe water for all'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop yesterday called on the government and non-government organisations to put in concerted efforts to ensure 'water security' in the country, saying that access to safe drinking water should be treated as a basic human right.

Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS), a research and policy institute, and Alternative Movement (AMRF) organised the workshop at the Women's Voluntary Association (WVA) auditorium in the city.

The objective of the workshop was to share the lessons learned from a participatory action research project on 'Drinking Water Security for the Poor and Women' in most difficult-and-hard-to-reach areas.

"The government and non-government organisations will have to work together to ensure safe drinking water for all, especially in the remote areas," said Fazle Rabbi Miah, chairman of parliamentary standing committee on the government assurance.

In the context of climate change, new water technology should be innovated to ensure supply of safe drinking water,

he said and called on the research institutes and NGOs to work in partnership with the government to this end.

Dr Atiq Rahman, executive director of BCAS, emphasised the need to increase access of the poor to equitable water supply.

SMA Rashid, executive director, NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation, also spoke.

The workshop was followed by technical sessions and open discussion on issues relating to local institutions, capacity building, right-based development approach and demonstration of technology.

## One held on charges of teasing DU girl

DU CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested a former Dhaka University (DU) student on Sunday on charges of black-mailing and teasing a female student of the university.

Officer-in-Charge of Shahbagh Police Station Rezaul Karim told The Daily Star that a female student has filed a case of blackmailing and teasing her against Abdullah Kafi.

Proctor Dr KM Saiful Islam Khan told reporters that the victim also made a complaint with the DU authorities, accusing Kafi, a former student of Mass Communication and Journalism department, of blackmailing her.

The female student in her complaint mentioned that Kafi was spreading propaganda about her, saying that he carries a porn video of her. She had become a victim of smear campaign by the same person several times.

## TORTURE IN NAME OF ARBITRATION HC asks govt to provide treatment to Hosne Ara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed the government to immediately provide proper treatment and security to Hosne Ara, a housewife of Pathorghata in Barguna district.

Hosne Ara was mercilessly beaten by the local upazila chairman in the name of arbitration.

The court also issued a rule upon the government to explain within two weeks why action would not be taken against the persons involved in the incident.

The HC bench of Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Md Rezaul Haque came up with the order upon a public interest writ petition filed by Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) leader Advocate Salma Ali.

The writ petition that challenged the legality of the incident of arbitration, also sought direction from the HC for providing security and treatment to the victim.

Petitioner's lawyer and also BNWLA President Advocate Fawzia Karim Firoze yesterday told The Daily Star that Showkat Hasanur Rahman, chairman of the Pathorghata Upazila, recently physically assaulted Hosne Ara in the name of an arbitration.

She is now under treatment at the Pathoghata healthcare complex and report was published in a national daily in this regard on Sunday, she said.

She said the writ petition was filed following the report.

The cabinet secretary, home secretary, deputy commissioner (DC) and superintendent of police (SP) of Barguna, officer-in-charge (OC) and the local upazila chairman have been made respondents in the rule.

## ATTACK ON TAPOSH Swapan sent to Suhrawardi Hospital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka Central Jail authorities yesterday referred ailing freedom fighter Kamrul Islam Swapan, who is detained in connection with a bomb attack on Awami League lawmaker Fazle Nur Taposh, to Suhrawardi Hospital from Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University as his physical condition deteriorated.

Earlier in the morning, he was taken to BSMMU from the jail for removing a stone from his kidney and after the surgery, he fell sick due to a cardiac arrest, said Swapan's wife Salma Haq.

Deputy Inspector General of Prisons Golam Haider said they sent Swapan to BSMMU for an operation.

## Beximco to launch news channel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Beximco Group has joined hands with NDTV Worldwide to launch a 24-hour news and current affairs television channel in the country to be named 'Independent Television Ltd'.

The business group through its media subsidiary plans to launch the channel by early September this year, says a press release yesterday.

It said the partnership between the two leading corporate bodies will offer news in a refreshing and thought-provoking manner to its discerning viewers.

"We aim at making Independent TV a leading news and current affairs channel in the country and would follow the highest ethical values to ensure that we achieve this objective," said Salman F Rahman, deputy chairman of Beximco Group.

NDTV Chairman Dr Pranoy Roy said they are delighted to tie up with Beximco in their expansion plan to become a leading media group in Bangladesh.

NDTV Worldwide is a media consulting company owned by New Delhi Television Ltd (NDTV). It has 21 years of broadcast experience and high-quality production and award-winning show formats.

## Rezia Begum

A CORRESPONDENT, Feni

Rezia Begum, mother of former lawmaker Joyal Hazari, passed away due to old age complications at her Feni residence yesterday at the age of 98.

She left behind her three sons, four daughters and a host of relatives to mourn her death.

She will be buried at her family graveyard at Masterpara in Feni after a namaz-e-janaza at 11:00am today.

## Abdul Halim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abdul Halim, father-in-law of Dr MS Akbar, chairman of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, passed away due to old age complications at Holy Family Red Crescent Medical College Hospital in the city yesterday, says a press release.

His namaz-e-janaza was held on the hospital premises.

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society Treasurer Captain (Retd) Abu Bakar, members of management committee conduced the death.

## Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi



Today is the 30th death anniversary of M Ataur Rahman, an anti-British movement and Liberation War veteran.

Ataur who took part in the Tebhaga and Language movements was also the governor of Rajshahi during Bangabandhu's government.

Born in 1925 at Charghat in Rajshahi, Ataur started politics at only 15. He became convener of the then East Bengal Jubo League of the then East Bengal in 1947.

He was elected member of National Assembly (MNA) in 1954 from jail.

## Shamsul Alam

METRO DESK



Today is the 16th death anniversary of Shamsul Alam, convener of the All Party State Language Movement Committee and founding member of Tamuddin Majlish, says a press release.

Born in 1926 at Gourangi in Tangail, Shamsul Alam was also a Rotarian. He retired as the general manager of Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory in 1982.

## JS bodies to have websites, MPs web pages

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Each of the parliamentary standing committees will have a dynamic website and every lawmaker will have a web page and parliamentary e-mail as part of building a digital parliament.

The computer council under the science and information and communication technology (ICT) ministry will implement a project in six months to this end.

State Minister for Science and ICT Yeafesh Osman in a scripted answer to a notice told the House yesterday.

The project also includes internet connectivity in the parliament building to bring dynamism in the parliamentary activities and increase lawmakers' IT efficiency.

Yeafesh said the parliament will be the centre point in building digital Bangladesh.

"Usage of ICT may make the lawmakers more active to play their role and it may also bring pace in parliamentary activities."

# WEATHER

## Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Prevailing mild cold wave over Rajshahi division and the regions of Dhaka, Tangail, Srimangal, Jessore and Kushtia may continue, Met Office said.

Moderate to thick fog may occur over the country during the period.

Night temperature may fall slightly over the country. The sun sets in the capital at 5:30pm today and rises at 6:44am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 27.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 7.4 degrees Celsius at Srimongal.

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	20.7	10.6	92	66
Chittagong	25.3	14.7	68	66
Rajshahi	20.	08.4	85	76
Khulna	23.0	12.5	77	63
Barisal	25.6	11.8	80	78
Sylhet	25.5	11.9	73	81
Cox's Bazar	27.0	15.8	59	65

# TODAY

## Seminar

Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) organises a seminar on 'Urban poverty: Dimensions and solutions'. Venue: LGED auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

## Discussion

Sammilita Ainjibi Samannaya Parishad will hold a discussion to mark the historic homecoming day of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Venue: Supreme Court Ainjibi Samity auditorium. Time: 4:30pm.

## Documentary show

A documentary film titled 'Living with cancer' will be screened to raise funds for Rubel, the son of a freedom fighter who is suffering from cancer. Venue: Alliance Francaise. Time: 6:00pm.

## Discussion

Sher-E-Bangla AK Fazlul Hoque Research Council will hold a discussion titled 'The contribution of Begum Rokeya to women emancipation'. Venue: National Museum auditorium. Time: 11:00am.

## Award ceremony

The award ceremony of the 5th Citycell Channel i Music Awards will be held. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 7:00pm.