

Dhaka, Delhi agree on 1,320MW joint venture power plant

Coal-fired plant to generate power in 3yrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and India yesterday agreed to form a joint-venture company to set up a two-unit coal-fired power plant of total 1,320 megawatt capacity in Khulna.

The two countries also agreed to establish a cross-border power grid, for which tenders will be invited this month, and the work order will be issued in June this year.

The decisions were taken at the second meeting of the Bangladesh-India Joint Steering Committee on Power Sector which had been formed during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Delhi last month.

Each of the units in the joint-venture power plant will have the capacity to generate 660MW of power using imported coal. National Thermal Power Corporation of India will carry out a feasibility study for the plant this month,

and submit a report by July this year to the Bangladesh government while the timeline for finishing the project has been set between 36 and 48 months of issuing the work order.

A bilateral document prior to signing of a memorandum of understanding regarding the matter is expected to be signed today.

At yesterday's meeting the Indian side was headed by its Power Secretary HS Brahma, who had flown to Dhaka on Thursday with a delegation on a three-day visit.

The power secretaries of both countries jointly briefed journalists about the meeting's resolutions at the PDB headquarters in Dhaka.

"We want to gather experience regarding coal based power plants, since in future we will have to set up several such power plants to utilise the coal deposits of the country," said Bangladesh Power Division Secretary Abul Kalam Azad who

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HELLO MAYOR
...
IS THIS OUR PARK

The photo taken yesterday shows a Dhaka City Corporation park in Sayedabad is being used as parking space for buses.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Amar Ekushey tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation pays tribute to the language martyrs today from midnight by placing wreaths at Shaheed Minars across the country.

The Central Shaheed Minar has put on a decorative look to mark February 21, the International Mother Language Day.

President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will place wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar soon after the zero hour. The speaker and a representative group of AL leaders will place wreaths after the premier.

Main opposition party chief and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will pay tribute to the language martyrs at 12:07am. Then all the diplomats and other political parties will place wreaths at the

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Environment ministry favours polluters

Writes to commerce ministry to allow scrap ship without pre-import cleaning

PINAKI ROY

The environment and forest ministry has requested the commerce ministry to relax its rules to allow ship breakers to import toxic ships without submission of pre-cleaning certificates from exporters.

The import of such ships will pose risks of health hazards for ship-breaking workers and widespread environmental pollution in the country's coastal belt.

In a letter to the commerce ministry on Wednesday, the environment and forest ministry said government officials would examine the ships and issue cleaning certificates.

"We have sent the letter to the commerce ministry. But we shall not let any ship pollute the environment. Our officials will examine the ships and only those without toxic substances will be allowed to enter the country's maritime territory," said Environment and Forest Secretary Dr Mihir Kanti Majumder.

He said the ministry is preparing a code of conduct on ship breaking in line with the High Court order and directives from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

"We shall complete it within two months," the secretary said.

Following an HC order, the commerce ministry amended its import policy order

2009-12 on January 28 this year making it mandatory for ship exporters to submit pre-cleaning certificate before any ship enters the country's maritime territory.

The HC directed the government to ensure cleaning of all ships before they enter the country and safety of ship-breaking workers, following a writ petition on March 18, 2009.

The Department of Customs recently barred at least 10 ships from entering the country's maritime territory as their exporters did not have any pre-cleaning certificates.

The Department of Explosives issues

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Khulna AL men obstruct other bidders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A group of local Awami League leaders on Thursday prevented 80 contractors from submitting bids at the Khalishpur Housing Estate office in Khulna.

Khalishpur Housing invited tenders for earth-filling work involving Tk 3 crore at Shibchar upazila housing estate in Madaripur.

The deadline for submission of bids was Thursday.

Sub-divisional Engineer of Khalishpur Housing Dabiruddin Ahmed said only nine bids were submitted while 80 others were prevented from dropping bid papers.

Some aggrieved contractors said a group of local ruling party leaders accompanied by

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REVIVAL OF 4-PARTY BNP's lukewarm response to alliance partners

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Revival of four-party alliance looks bleak as key component BNP is now indifferent on the issue despite high enthusiasm of other coalition partners.

Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Oikya Jote and Bangladesh Jatiya Party are very eager to face the government jointly from now on. Jamaat chief Mattur Rahman Nizami recently met BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to discuss the issue but according to BNP leaders Khaleda wanted to forge movement against the government as individual parties.

While talking to The Daily Star last night, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir said BNP will continue its own programmes and they did not start any discussion regarding revival of the four-party alliance.

"We are observing anti-government programmes besides going ahead with our reorganisation process. The matter of four-party alliance did not formally come up for discussion. But top

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Elderly couple burnt alive

40 houses gutted in Thakurgaon fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

An elderly couple were burnt alive and ten others injured in a fire in Pirganj upazila of the district Thursday night. The fire also damaged 40 houses.

The deceased were identified as Hemanta Roy, 70, and Sharmila Roy, 55, of Sindagar village of the upazila.

Fire fighters, police and local people said the fire originated from Hemanta's house at about 8:00pm. Hemanta's clothes caught fire when he was warming himself by a fire in his room. He was unable to move for his illness and was burnt alive.

Hemanta's wife Sharmila received severe burn injuries

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UN climate change process in limbo

AFP, Paris

The UN process for tackling global warming is now captainless as well as rudderless after climate chief Yvo de Boer suddenly announced his resignation two months after the ill-starred Copenhagen summit.

De Boer, 55, announced on Thursday he would step down as executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to pursue a career in the private sector.

His abrupt departure -- and the search for a successor able to satisfy 194 nations -- adds

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Branches of six Palash trees on the Central Shaheed Minar premises in the city were chopped off while another, a blooming one, inset, also lost a few of its branches. The photo was taken yesterday.



Shaheed Minar loses 6 trees for Ekushey celebration

DU CORRESPONDENT

Branches of six Palash trees on the Central Shaheed Minar premises in the city have been chopped off for ensuring easy telecast of the Language Movement Day programme in the early hours of February 21.

Visiting the spot yesterday afternoon, this correspondent found the six trees standing without any branches. Another one, which was with colourful flowers, also had lost a few of its branches. Nobody could immediately say who cut those branches.

Some workers involved in decorating the Shaheed Minar said two stages would be set up on the roof of a one-story building just behind the trees.

One stage will be controlled by the state-run BTV for the live telecast of the event while Dhaka University authorities will use the other to deliver the programme commentary, said DU Proctor KM Saiful Islam.

Sources said the Public Works Department (PWD) authorities have cut the

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Service-seekers face hassle at BRTA

Withdrawal of 200 volunteers worsens situation

MUKHLESUR RAHMAN

Suffering of service-seekers at Mirpur BRTA has multiplied after the recent withdrawal of around 200 yellow-jersey volunteers, who used to assist 30 officials and staff at the understaffed office.

Officials at the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) said work is now piling up every day as they can do only 25 percent of a day's work at the Mirpur office where 75 automobile and about 100 motorbike owners seek vehicle registration and 750 vehicles come for fitness tests on an average day, apart from other service seekers.

Talking to The Daily Star, a number of service seekers at BRTA said one could have got the required service there if that person came early in the morning and gave a tremendous amount of effort. But now it sometimes takes four days

to get something done.

"I went to BRTA on four consecutive days to get my sister's car registered and finally I got it done on the fourth day. On the first two days I just went from counters to counters to know the process," said a service seeker.

"As I found long queue at every counter, it took me sometimes an hour to be the first in line at the counter and get the official's counsel. On the third day I managed to reach a staff, who helped me fill up the necessary papers. I had to give him some 'tip' in return," the person said.

The volunteers used help people advising them on how to get things done at the BRTA in return for tips.

During the last caretaker government's rule, the authorities introduced the 200 yellow-jersey outsiders at BRTA allowing them to aid officials and staff of the severely understaffed

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PM accuses BNP govt of renaming 200 institutions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday defended her position on renaming different institutions and structures, saying the BNP-Jamaat coalition deserves a lesson.

"We started construction of 200-250 institutions and structures during our previous rule. But after assuming power, they [the BNP-Jamaat coalition government] changed the names of those institutions one after another. They did not think that the renaming game will not end there, so they need a lesson," she said.

"Changing the name of just one or two structures has upset them; what will happen if we change the names of 250 structures?" said the Awami League chief while addressing a discussion on the International Mother Language Day at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital yesterday.

"I hope they will not engage in any game of renaming in the future," she added.

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BSF tortures 2 Bangladeshi cattle traders

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) personnel allegedly tortured two cattle traders and cut off the left wrist of one of them Thursday night.

The victim, Golam Hossain, 35, son of Akkas Ali Sarder of Boalia village in Kalaroa upazila, brought the allegation against the BSF troops of Hakimpur camp under Swarnapnagar Police Station in India while he was talking to The Daily Star correspondent at Sathkira Sadar Hospital yesterday.

Local people rescued him and took him to the hospital in a critical condition after he

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