

SHIFT IN TRUST... >>>

Production at this lantern factory in Keraniganj was hardly 700 a day a few months ago but with increasing power cuts in the country, the factory had to boost production due to high demand. Now it is producing over 2,000 a day. People seem to be relying more and more on such lamps as power has become unreliable.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Frequent outage cripples city

HELEMUL ALAM

It's only early March, but the electricity crisis has been so acute that the city dwellers feel like it is already high summer.

Most areas in the capital are experiencing frequent power cuts. The residents shudder to think how things will be when the summer is in full swing.

So far, Khilgaon, Rampura, Banasri and Mirpur have been the worst-hit. In last few days, power has gone out up to 20 times a day.

Students studying for the Secondary School Certificate and Higher Secondary Certificate exams are the most affected as the blackouts are hampering their preparations.

"We could not sleep on Monday night because the power went out at least 30 times during the night and it was difficult to sleep without a fan," said Anwar, a resident of Khilgaon.

He said the lack of power also prevents water being lifted from underground reservoirs into rooftop tanks.

Sheuli, a resident of Rampura Banasri, said she had electricity for just one hour until yesterday evening.

"Items in our refrigerator, particularly meat and fish, are rotting due to the continuous power outage," she said.

The load shedding has also started creeping into the lives of residents in Uttara, Kalabagan, Mirpur, Pallabi, Gendaria, Ulan, Labagh and Islambagh.

The present situation indicates a severe power crisis in the coming months.

The woes of residents will be exacerbated during the heat of summer.

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Padma Bridge tender likely by early Apr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tender for the \$2.4 billion Padma Multi-purpose Bridge are likely to be invited late this month or in early April, sources in the Economic Relations Division said.

The communications ministry in cooperation with a donor group led by the World Bank almost completed chalking out bidders' pre-qualification criteria for building the bridge that will have both road and rail ways linking the south-western region of the country with the east.

Earlier this week, WB appreciated the government.

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS FOR MPs

Tk 15cr granted for each constituency

Lawmakers to propose, LGED to carry out projects; Ecneec okays 9 other projects, including one to procure 300 buses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) yesterday approved a project granting Tk 15 crore for rural infrastructure development work in each respective constituency.

The project of Tk 4,691 crore has been taken to carry out rural infrastructure development works in the constituencies of lawmakers "irrespective of party affiliation."

Ecneec at a meeting approved a total of 10 projects, including this one, to be implemented at a cost of Tk 7,844 crore. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina chaired the meeting.

The projects include another for procuring 300 single decker CNG buses for Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation at a cost of Tk 243 crore for plying on the Dhaka city routes.

The tenure of the Tk 4,691 crore project titled "project for rural infrastructure

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REPLACING ZIA'S NAME BNP MPs walk out of JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP-led opposition lawmakers yesterday staged a brief walkout from parliament in protest against placing a bill seeking to rename Shaheed Ziaur Rahman University, Barisal, as Barisal University.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid tabled the bill in line with a cabinet decision to rename all establishments named after Ziaur Rahman.

The past BNP government named the university as per a law titled Shaheed Ziaur Rahman University Barisal Act made in 2006.

Before the bill was placed in the House, BNP lawmaker

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SP Kohinoor 'disappears'

Police fail to trace him 5 months into suspension; probe finds him guilty of 2004 polling centre firing; fellow police official Mazharul also on the run

SHARIFUL ISLAM in Dhaka and AMINUL ISLAM from Mymensingh

Police failed to arrest suspended police officer Kohinoor Mian even five months after the home ministry suspended him following a criminal case filed in connection with beating up of a woman in Dhanmondi on March 12, 2006.

The suspension came on October 4 last year after a Dhaka court in September took a case into cognisance. Shahin Sultana Shanta with another Dhaka court on March 24, 2006 filed the case against 25 policemen.

In the complaint, Shanta said police assaulted and dragged her out of a clinic where she took shelter during a pitched battle



between the police and the then opposition party activists in front of Rapa Plaza in the capital's Dhanmondi area. The incident occurred when she was going to pick her son from a school.

Along with superintendent of police Kahonoor, who was attached to the office of Rajshahi Range Deputy Inspector General, Additional DIG Mazharul Hoque

was also suspended. Inspector General of Police Nur Mohammad told The Daily Star yesterday that the two suspended police officials are now on the run.

Meanwhile, a high-powered departmental enquiry revealed that policemen led by then

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Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha in presence of police and Rajuk officials demolishes around 100 illegal structures on Gulshan Lake at city's Shahjapur yesterday. Gulshan Lake was declared ecologically critical in 1997. The High Court directed the government to free the lake from encroachments by August 31 this year.

PHOTO: STAR

Contempt rule on Prothom Alo for report on HC bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a contempt rule on the Prothom Alo Editor and Publisher Matiuur Rahman and reporter Mizanur Rahman Khan for publishing a report on granting wholesale anticipatory bail and bail for convicts.

The rule asked them to explain within four weeks why contempt proceedings should not be drawn against them.

A division bench of the HC comprised of Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana and Justice Md Rais Uddin issued the rule following a petition filed by Muhammad Fakhruddin, a Supreme Court lawyer.

The Prothom Alo carried the report headlined 'Massive irregularities in granting bail'

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SP did more than grabbing lands

KAILASH SARKAR

Police Superintendent Mizanur Rahman who was closed to the headquarters last month on charges of attempting to grab other peoples' farmlands in Gopalganj, had some other alleged nefarious operations as well, according to the Police Headquarters sources.

A Chittagong based fertiliser trader on the 1st of this month filed a written allegation with the inspector general of police (IGP) against Mizan, saying the SP had forced him to pay Tk 11.5 lakh, with threats of putting him in 'crossfire', the sources said.

Mizan's wife owns a medium sized fertiliser production company Mollah NPKS Ltd, but Mizan himself mainly runs the business, flouting government service rules, the sources added.

The company has two factories, one at Rayerbagh and the other at Fatullah, both on the outskirts of the capital.

The complainant, Omar Faruq, said in the written allegation that he used to be a distributor of Mollah NPKS fertiliser in exchange for a 20 percent commission per sack.

In 2008 he received 400 sacks of fertiliser from Mollah NPKS, but found that the fertiliser was of very bad quality, and since then he was asking Mizan to take back the supplied bad fertiliser,



Mizanur Rahman

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KIBRIA KILLING CASE Court wants Babar produced Mar 14, Mithu today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A court in Habiganj yesterday ordered that former state minister for home Lutfuzzaman Babar be produced before it on March 14 in SAMS Kibria killing case.

The same day the court will hear the Criminal Investigation Department's prayer for Babar to be placed on a fresh remand.

Judicial Magistrate Shamsul Islam passed the order.

He also directed the officers concerned to produce Huji operative Mizanur Rahman Mithu before the court today.

The order came after CID ASP Rafiqul Islam filed a petition seeking a 10-day remand

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250 tolas gold looted from a city jeweller's

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An armed gang looted over 250 tolas of gold ornaments from a jeweller's at Muktiyoddha Market in the city's Mirpur area yesterday afternoon.

Five youths entered the shop posing as customers, pointed firearms at the lone employee present at the time and made off with the ornaments within minutes, said witnesses and police.

Protesting the robbery, over five thousand shopkeepers and traders closed their shops and businesses, and demanded recovery of the looted ornaments.

Nityaprio Ghosh, employee of the robbed Sananda Jewellers, said, "The

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Pro-people projects of BNP govt won't be stopped: PM

UNB, Dhaka

The present government will not stop any pro-people project and programme, which were initiated during the last BNP-led four-party alliance government.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said this when Director General of World Health Organization (WHO) Dr Margaret Chan called on her at the PM's office yesterday morning.

Dr Chan congratulated the PM as she has been named among the Asia's eight top powerful women by American broadcaster CNN, said PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad.

She also lauded Hasina and her government for quick and innovative initiatives to ensure quality but cheap medical services for the mass people of the country.

Dr Chan informed Hasina about her experience during her visit to a rural area of Bangladesh when she saw a health official giving health advices through mobile phone to rural people living in the remote areas.

She said she came to know that the health official daily receives at least 100 phone calls from the people in remote areas

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Low quality seed sellers warned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury yesterday warned the seed companies not to sell low quality seed to farmers.

"Do business, make profit. I am with you. But if you cheat farmers, I will make the name of your company public and ask the farmers not to buy seed from the fraudulent company," she said during the inaugural ceremony of Bangladesh Seed Conference and Fair 2010.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Bangladesh Seed Association jointly organized the event styled "Promoting Cooperation in Seed for Regional Food Security" at the Bangabandhu International

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