

# Snipers, gunfire remain in Syrian cities

AFP, Cairo

Arab League chief Nabil al-Arabi said yesterday that snipers and gunfire remain in Syrian cities and called for an immediate halt to the shootings, in his first remarks since Arab monitors were deployed.

"There are still snipers and gunfire. There must be a total halt to the gunfire," the League chief said, in the face of mounting criticism of the hard-won observer mission's failure to stem the persistent bloodshed.

Arabi charged that snipers were still deployed on rooftops in protest centres threatening the lives of civilians, even as monitors try to end the Syrian government's deadly crackdown that has claimed thousands of lives since March.

"We must raise this with the Syrian government because the aim (of sending monitors) is to stop the shooting and protect civilians," Arabi told a news conference at Arab League headquarters in Cairo.

But "it is difficult to say who is firing on whom," he said.

The head of the observer mission, Sudanese

General Mohammed Ahmed Mustafa al-Dabi, is due to send his "first report in the next two days" on the situation in Syria, Arabi said.

"An Arab foreign minister has asked that a ministerial meeting be convened to discuss the report," he added.

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, at least three civilians were killed by gunfire in Syria yesterday, two of them in separate shooting incidents in the flashpoint central city of Homs.

The third victim was a farmer who was hit by a stray bullet as security forces opened fire during a raid on a village near Damascus to hunt down suspects wanted by the authorities.

Arabi said the Arab League may call for a meeting next week of foreign ministers to evaluate the work of the observers, who arrived in Syria on December 26 and began touring protest hubs the following day.

According to Arabi, Syrian authorities released 3,848 detainees since the observer mission started last week, adding that the Arab League had asked the Syrian opposition to provide it with a list of names of those who remained in custody.

## 10-year jail

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Authority Act-2011, her Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad told newsmen.

The council of ministers also approved Bangladesh Atomic Energy Control Act-2011 and endorsed proposals to ratify 'Saarc Convention on Cooperation on Environment' and 'The Charter of the Asian Institute of Technology'.

Azad said the draft speech of the president to be delivered at the first session of Jatiya Sangsad this year was also approved at the meeting. The prime minister instructed officials concerned to make it a speech of 20 minutes.

At the meeting, the premier directed the communications ministry to send Kaler Kantho senior reporter Nikhil Bhadra abroad for better treatment. Sources said the journalist would be given Tk 10 lakh from the government.

Nikhil suffered critical injuries in a road accident in front of the Jatiya Press Club on December 28. His right leg was amputated.

# Discord on power tariff baffles all

FROM PAGE 1

What is actually happening? What did the energy adviser mean by adjustment of the tariff? Who should the media believe? If the energy adviser says his senior policy maker colleague should not be taken literally, is he not conveying to the public his no-confidence on him? Could he not clarify the matter with the minister privately before Muhith left the conference -- so that Muhith could correct himself if there was any mistake on his part?

The finance minister intensified the confusion further by stating that the latest hike was not caused by rental power plants.

But Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (Berc) increased power tariff several times last year in response to the government's appeals. The government's appeal to hike the power is so strong that Berc has agreed to increase the retail tariff again in February.

Since last year, the government has been seeking

15 percent power tariff hike every six months for the next three years, with the view to increase the bulk rate to Tk 4.8 per unit from the present level of around Tk 3. Why?

Because due to the government's policy of fuel oil based rental power project as a quick solution to the country's power crisis, the country's fuel oil import has doubled. This has also pushed up power generation cost from Tk 2.5 per unit of 2009 to Tk 4.8 per unit now. As a result, if the power tariff is not increased, Power Development Board (PDB) will need Tk 9,000 crore subsidy this year. Such a huge subsidy is eating up the government's coffers.

Therefore, indeed the rental power plants have pushed up the power tariff and that needs to be addressed. The finance minister was right in saying that over the next three years, tariff will have to be increased. He was wrong in saying that rental power did not cause the tariff hike.

The energy adviser confused the audience by emphasising on "adjustment" of price -- which implies that the tariff could be reduced. In the history of Bangladesh, the only tariff of any energy product ever reduced was the price of petroleum. Petroleum is an imported product. In recent decades, its price sometimes went below 20 US dollars and shot up beyond 130 dollars a barrel. Adjusting petroleum price is therefore a rational approach.

But it is not the same with power tariff. The country's power is largely generated by natural gas. In recent years, the government turned to rental power projects using imported fuel oil due to a gas crisis. These fuel oil based rental plants have signed three to five years contracts. Their asking price for power generation is higher than that of conventional plants. So if the fuel oil price on the international market falls drastically, the government will save a good amount in

importing the fuel, but will still pay high cost for the rental plants.

Besides, installing a power plant has become much costlier than the nineties and thus affecting power generation cost. The devaluation of taka is another killer factor in this regard.

Side by side, the government is also increasing gas price. With this increase, the input cost for power generation is being directly affected.

With these facts in place, it is highly unlikely that within two-three years, the government will have any scope to reduce power price. If within this period the government can reach a comfort zone, it could just stop increasing the price for a while.

This situation is well known to both the adviser and the minister. But their open disagreement neither helps the reality nor informs the public, nor does it give a good impression about what an adviser to the PM thinks of a minister.

# No good news in politics

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the coming days.

The way the ruling AL-led government unilaterally abolished the CG system in June 2011 was nothing but the outcome of the pervasive culture of confrontation in politics.

It rejected outright the demands raised by the opposition as well as a number of non-partisan eminent citizens for retaining the CG system in the interest of holding free and fair parliamentary elections.

The Supreme Court in May declared unconstitutional and void the provision relating to the CG system, but it also stated that two more parliamentary polls could be held under the system.

Government policymakers vehemently defended and relied on the verdict to reject the demand for retaining the CG system, although there was a controversy over the clarity of the apex court's verdict.

The government action in respect of the cancellation of the CG and non-action on some other issues clearly makes a mockery of the ruling AL's own electoral pledges to bring about changes in the culture of confrontation in politics, which has made parliament ineffective, hampered rule of law, and marred good governance.

In the wake of political violence on the streets in 2006 and 2007 centering

around the ninth parliamentary polls, the AL in its electoral manifesto pledged that tolerance and decency would come into political culture and efforts would be taken to formulate a code of conduct acceptable to all.

The AL also pledged reforms for ensuring democratic practices within political parties, and promised to take all measures necessary to make parliament more effective.

But all pledges remain only on paper. The government has yet to make any move to implement the electoral pledges in order to bring about a qualitative change in political culture.

And as a result political culture has remained bereft of any change. Even the animosities between the two arch rival camps -- AL and BNP -- are on the rise on some fronts, contributing largely to a diminishing of hope for a political consensus among them about the mode of holding the next parliamentary polls after expiry of the incumbent government's tenure.

Given the developing situation, New Year 2012 will mark the fourth year of the AL-led government in office. The government might not be able to offer anything pleasant in people's political lives since the legacy of yesterdays' political events is set to dominate the next political course.

The New Year may witness much heat in the political arena centering on the formation of the next Election Commission (EC) after the expiry of the incumbent EC in early February this year.

The formation of the new EC now appears to be much crucial after the cancellation of the CG that earlier took office after the expiry of a partisan government's tenure and provided all support to the EC to hold parliamentary polls since 1996.

So, the government's any unilateral move to appoint people of its own choice as chief election commissioner and election commissioners may add fuel to the opposition parties' street agitation.

In light of the bitter memories of political deadlocks the country has suffered in the past over EC-related controversies, people aware of political developments have already voiced concern about a further deterioration of the political situation.

The rival ruling and opposition camps may not be equally blamed for the unchanged political culture and for growing anxiety and fear in the public mind. But neither of them has demonstrated the political will necessary to initiate responsible and constructive politics in the last three years.

Instead, many senior

leaders and MPs of both parties were seen unilaterally engaging in a war of words, even to the point of making derogatory remarks and exchanging tirades in and outside parliament, thus contributing largely to a polluting of the political atmosphere.

Thanks to the ruling party's indifference to its own electoral promise of making parliament functional, the main opposition BNP seems to have opted for holding parliament hostage to its demands in order to make political gains.

They have been frequently boycotting the House, making it unable to function effectively. In so doing, the BNP has also ignored its electoral pledges made before the last polls to take tough measures to put a stop to the House boycott culture.

In brief, one can say that the way things are moving across the political landscape shows a similarity with the events that led to the declaration of a state of emergency in January 2007.

Still, solutions to all the problems lie in the ruling and opposition camps' political will which is the driving force for change. And it is their political will that can offer people good news in the New Year, removing all anxiety from their political lives.

# Jica asks govt to fix pending issues

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Mass Transport Company (DMTC) by May, said sources in Jica.

"The SPO should be in place by mid-January while the alternative route needs to be approved by the end of this month," said a Jica official requesting anonymity.

Apart from this, the newly formed railway ministry has now expressed the desire to implement the project as per rules of business, said sources.

The Bridge Division of the communications ministry has so far been pursuing negotiation on the metro rail with Jica, which does not want the rail ministry to implement the project.

The government also has to address this issue immediately.

The fourth fact-finding team of Jica during its visit in

December last year brought these issues up with the government. The previous three teams of Jica also raised these requirements time and again since January last, but the government has made little progress to expedite the project procedure.

Prof Md Shamsul Hoque, a member of technical committee on metro project, said it was really very difficult to meet the prerequisites and achieve the goal of loan negotiation within the given timeframe.

"The government should have given more attention to the project. The more the preparation is delayed the project will face more obstructions which may lead to further difficulty and uncertainty," he said.

SM Saleh Uddin, executive director of Dhaka Transport Coordination

Board, the owning agency of the metro project, said the proposal for route approval is with the communications ministry. It needs the nod from the cabinet, he added.

On SPO, Saleh Uddin said seven officials, including him as the managing director, have been designated for it, but as per Jica requirement the SPO needs eight more members.

According to him, the formation of DMTC would take at least a year's time.

Meanwhile, the relocated metro depot requires acquisition of 22 hectares of private land to the north of Uttara third phase model town. This would need a comprehensive Environment and Social Impact Assessment and no objection from the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha.

Saleh Uddin said they are

estimating the land required and evaluating the proposed site.

Asked why they had not already got the alternative route approved, he said it was delayed as they were busy with many other jobs.

The complication with the metro route arose when Bangladesh Air Force objected to the Bijoy Sarani section of the route on the grounds that the 19-metre-high metro rail would hinder operations at Tejgaon airfield. It pressed for diversion of the route along Sangsad Avenue through Khamarbari.

Experts in this field termed the objection unfounded and said if diverted, the metro rail would encroach upon the Sangsad Bhaban complex, a world renowned architectural site, to a great extent.

## Vacancy Announcement



United Nations Development Programme in Bangladesh announces a vacancy for the following positions for "Police Reform Programme (PRP)" project. The project duration is until June, 2014.

1. Project Assistant (1 Position)
2. Procurement Assistant (1 Position)
3. Admin and Finance Assistant (3 Positions)

The duration of the Service contract is one year initially, subject to renewal on an annual basis upon satisfactory performance and availability of funds.

For details of the Job Description and instructions to apply, please visit our website: <http://www.undp.org.bd/jobs>. Applications should be received no later than 17.00 PM, Tuesday, January 17, 2012.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. Female candidates are particularly encouraged to apply.

### Driver cum Messenger :

**Duties and Responsibilities:** The incumbent will drive the project vehicle within / outside Dhaka city to meet the transportation requirement of the project, day-to-day maintenance of the vehicle, maintain a log book, arrange repairs where necessary, collect / deliver mail or documents when required

**Qualifications and Experiences:** The incumbent should have at least secondary education or equivalent level, with at least five years of relevant experience. The incumbent must have a valid heavy / light vehicles driving license. Good knowledge of road network in Dhaka and surrounding areas and adequate knowledge and skills in vehicle maintenance and minor repair are essential. She / he must have working knowledge of communicative English. Experience of UN or government organizations would be an asset;

**Submission of Application:** Application should be marked 'Confidential' and the position applied for i.e. Driver-cum- Messenger - PRP should be clearly written on the A4 Size envelope. Application including curriculum vitae and a recent passport-size photograph should be sent to the HR Cluster, UNDP-Dhaka, GPO Box: 224, Dhaka-1000, or deposited at the Deposit Box at the IDB Bhaban (Ground Floor), Begum Rokeya Sharani, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207 by January 17, 2012.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.  
Submitted documents will not be returned to the applicants.



## ঢাকা পাওয়ার ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন কোম্পানী লিমিটেড

### DHAKA POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY LTD

(An Enterprise of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh)  
Biddyt Bhaban, 1, Abdul Goni Road, Dhaka-1000

Memo No:- DPDC/CS-5/Appointment/MD/2010/913

Date: 29/12/11

### JOB OPPORTUNITY

Dhaka Power Distribution Company Ltd (DPDC), entrusted with the responsibility of operation, maintenance and development of the power system network within the geographical area of DPDC, invites applications from the energetic and promising citizen of Bangladesh for immediate appointment to the following post on contract basis for initially a period of maximum three (3) years, may be extended by another two (2) years, but renewal is subjected to satisfactory performance against specific yearly targets to be set by the Board, during which the age limit will not exceed 60 years.

#### 1. Managing Director:

The Managing Director is the Chief Executive of the Company responsible to the Board of Directors. He is the leader of the Management Team of the Company, responsible for overall management, e.g., administration, corporate planning, business development and ensuring the compliances of laws, Rules and Regulations and for Good Governance including development of setup, rules, regulations and systems and legal functions of the organization. He is also responsible for supervision of all technical, financial, welfare aspects, negotiating project financing issues with donors/development partners and listing the company in the stock exchange(s) etc.

#### Required Qualification:

Candidates must be Graduate Engineer or Post Graduate in Management, Social Science, Physical Science, Applied Science, Finance, Accounting or FCA/FCMA/MBA. The candidate shall have at least twenty five (25) years of experience in large Public Utility Organization, Large Private Sector Company working in a multidisciplinary environment, including experience of working in the 1st, 2nd or 3rd position of the organization. Candidates with post Graduate Qualifications in Engineering and experience of working in large public electric utility will get preference. The candidate should be efficient, dynamic, energetic, show initiative with assertive leadership ability that will ensure the vision and execute the mission for incremental growth of the Company, and excellent communication skills in Bangla and English and shall be capable of working under and managing the emergency situations.

#### Age Limit:

Age should preferably be between fifty (50) and fifty seven (57) years as on 01-01-2012. Age can be relaxable in case of exceptionally qualified deserving candidates.

#### Remuneration/Compensation Package:

Basic salary per month Taka one lac (1,00,000.00) only plus house rent (if proper accommodation could not be made available) Taka fifty thousand (50,000.00) per month, two festival bonuses in year, contributory provident fund, group insurance, encashment of leave, fringe benefits, gratuity, etc., as per applicable rules of the company. Expenses at actual medical services of self, and other as mentioned in the company Service Rules will be reimbursed up to a maximum limit of three (3) month basic salary per annum, and full time transport with driver will be provided. Income tax shall have to be paid by the employee. This remuneration/compensation package will be subjected to adjustment in the pay structure of the company to be finalized later on.

Only the short listed candidates will be called for interviews. Interested Candidate may apply along with complete CV, Two (2) passport size recent photographs, attested photocopies of all educational and experience certificates, attested copy of National Identity Card and the first eight (8) pages of the passport (if available or should be submitted after selection), should reach the Chairman of the company at the above address on or before 22 January, 2012 (Sunday) within the office hour.

In service candidates should submit applications through proper channel within the stipulated date & time.

Company Secretary, DPDC  
E-mail-CS@dpdc.org