

## POWER PLANT Deal with Delhi today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Power Development Board (PDB) today will strike an agreement with the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) of India to build a 1,320-megawatt coal-fired power plant in Bagerhat's Rampal.

The PDB will sign its first-ever joint venture deal with a foreign firm at a ceremony at Bidyut Bhawan in the city. Finance Minister AMA Muhith and other top government officials of both the countries will attend the event.

A five-member team of the NTPC led by Indian Power Secretary P Uma Shankar arrived in Dhaka yesterday to sign the agreement.

The PDB and the NTPC will implement the \$1.5 billion project on a 50:50 equity basis. The NTPC will set up and operate the plant.

## Govt moves

FROM PAGE 20

stop road accidents across the country by implementing traffic rules strictly, she added.

A high official of the home ministry said the traffic police could not implement the traffic rules strictly due to lack of manpower. To put an end to the problems, we have decided to increase manpower for the traffic police.

He said the ministry has already asked Police Headquarters to prepare 66 organograms and sent those to the ministry for increasing manpower for proper implementation of traffic rules to ease the traffic jam and stop road accidents.

Earlier this month, a meeting in this respect was held at the Prime Minister's Office with Adviser to the Prime Minister HT Imam in the chair, according to a high placed source.

The source said the government already appointed 16,448 police personnel against 32,031 newly created posts and 215 ASPs have already been appointed.

"The public administration ministry has issued no objection clearance against 23,342 created posts, including 22,488 non-cadre posts, while it will take step to clear the rest of posts," the source said quoting the meeting.

The finance ministry gave approval to disburse money against 21,749 created posts out of the total posts from December 2, 2009 to December 19, 2011 period. The ministry has also taken urgent initiative to give approval to 10,282 created posts.

## Gilani laments

FROM PAGE 20

unacceptable, illegal and counterproductive."

Relations between the United States and Pakistan have deteriorated sharply over the last year, with Islamabad furious about the surprise deadly raid on al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden's hideout in Abbottabad last year.

The two sides have also been at loggerheads over a US air strike in November in which 24 Pakistani soldiers were killed.

The US halted drone strikes on Pakistan soil in the immediate aftermath of that strike but they have since resumed.

US officials say the north-western tribal belt provides sanctuary to Taliban fighting in Afghanistan, al-Qaeda groups plotting attacks on the West, Pakistani Taliban who routinely bomb Pakistan and other foreign fighters.

In public, Pakistani leaders always insist they are against drone strikes, which are deeply unpopular in the country, but US officials insist that they privately cooperate with the programme.

Gilani said that Pakistan now wanted to agree new rules of engagement with the United States.

"The unilateral action taken in Abbottabad that was not liked in any quarter... We need assurances that such a unilateral action will not be repeated in the future. There is a trust deficit."

The prime minister said it was in both countries' interests to cooperate as partners and Pakistan had paid a high price at the hands of militant groups.

## Govt slaps ban

FROM PAGE 1

rally and bring out a procession from the AL central office on Bangabandhu Avenue today to protest "the opposition's conspiracy to create anarchy and foil the war crimes trial."

AL Khulna unit and its other city units also announced that they would hold rallies.

Khulna AL unit President and Mayor Talukdar Abdul Khaleque said the party would not organise any human chain or procession following a police ban on public gatherings in Khulna today.

BNP Khulna City President Nazrul Islam Monju has said the local chapter of the party would act on instructions from the party high command.

Acting BNP secretary general Alamgir told the government not to view the decision as her party's weakness, saying the BNP would observe its programmes as per schedule in the other cities and districts.

But if the government slapped a ban on public gatherings in other places, the party's local units would immediately announce fresh programmes, Alamgir said.

He said the government had imposed the ban from fear of a huge public response to the programme. The ban once again reflects its "undemocratic" and "fascist attitude," said the BNP leader.

In a statement yesterday, DMP Commissioner Benazir Ahmed said, "It appears that public safety, and law and order in the metropolitan areas may deteriorate. There could be subversive activities due to the mass procession and rallies announced by the city AL and BNP the same day."

He, however, did not clarify why it appeared to him that public safety, and law and order may deteriorate.

"I announce a ban on human chain, protest rally, sit-in, meeting or rally and procession," he said.

The ban will remain in force in the capital from 6:00am to 12:00midnight, said the DMP commissioner.

BNP insiders said the party will again defer Monday's programme for one or two days if the government obstructs its Monday's programme.

Khaleda Zia had earlier asked the government to lift the ban and cancel the ruling party's "counterprogramme".

"It will not be possible to thwart movement through conspiracy and repression. And its outcome will not be good."

Khaleda was speaking at a function at the Institute of Diploma Engineers in the capital.

The BNP chairperson's

remarks came hours after the DMP had imposed the 18-hour ban.

Khaleda said it was the democratic right of people to hold peaceful demonstrations.

"A mass procession programme was supposed to be held tomorrow [today]. I had announced the programme one and a half months ago, and Awami League later declared a counter programme to obstruct our programme."

Khaleda said the "failed government" is detached from the people, and the huge public response to the BNP's earlier programmes had given it a scare.

"The people are going through a period of uncertainty... they are getting frustrated. The government is becoming intolerant. Democracy is in trouble, and national interests and people's safety are at stake. We have to overcome this situation through a concerted effort."

She later held two meetings with the leaders of the BNP-led four-party alliance.

## Applications

FROM PAGE 20

The price has been estimated at Tk 3,500 per square foot, said Akhter Hussain Bhuiyan, member (estate) of Rajuk. He however hinted the price could be lowered further.

To purchase a flat, a buyer will have to make a down-payment first, while the rest of the amount would be payable in instalments.

The consortium of local Ena Properties Limited and South Korean firm Donga will construct 79 apartment buildings on 215 acres of land in Block-A. Each of the 16-storey buildings will have 64 flats.

Besides having conventional power sources, the buildings will have provisions for using solar power and harvesting rain water.

The government is trying to attract Malaysian fund to construct the rest of the buildings in blocks B and C, said Rajuk chairman.

Earlier in July 2010, Rajuk had moved to invite applications as it expected to have the allotment guideline approved in three months and start the construction by November then.

But the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) took until last October to approve the mega project worth Tk9,000 crore to build over 22,500 flats along with civic facilities in a bid to address the growing housing needs in the capital.

The Rajuk has also planned to build similar apartment complexes in its Purbachal New Town and Jhilmil Residential Area projects.

## Saudi women to be allowed in stadium

AP, Riyadh

A government-run Saudi Arabian newspaper yesterday reported that for the first time in the conservative Muslim country, women will be allowed to attend soccer matches in one of the country's stadiums.

Al-Sharq newspaper on Saturday quoted unnamed officials as saying that women will be able to watch the matches in a new facility that will be completed in 2014 in the western port city of Jeddah.

The officials say that the new stadium will include a family section with private cabins and balconies for women who wish to attend the games.

Saudi Arabia's strict interpretation of Islam prohibits unrelated men and women from mingling. Women and men in Saudi Arabia remain highly segregated and are restricted in how they are allowed to mix in public.

## 12 'parties'

FROM PAGE 1

They alleged the government had been working to implement India's agenda, and in one such effort, it had set up the International Crimes Tribunal to harass Islamic scholars and wipe out Islam from this country.

The speakers also called for the immediate release of Jamaat-e-Islami and BNP leaders detained on charges of crimes against humanity committed during the Liberation War.

Addressing the convention, Jatiya Gonotantrik Party President Shaiful Alam Pradhan said, "Sayeede [Jamaat's naye-e-ameer] is not a war criminal. He rather encouraged people to participate in the Liberation War. And Salauddin Quader Chowdhury [BNP lawmaker] played a neutral role."

Abdur Rob Yusufi, naye-e-ameer of Khelafat Majlish, said the government must apologise to the people for "its acts against Islam".

Also present at the convention were, among others, Moulana Shah Ahmadullah Ashraf, ameer of Khelafat Andolon; Moulana Mohammad Ishak, ameer of Khelafat Majlish; Moulana Mufti Ijharul Islam Chowdhury, chairman of Islami Oikya Jote; Sheikh Shawkat Hossain Nilu, chairman of National People's Party; Abdur Rakib, chairman of Nejam-e-Islam Party; Momtaj Chowdhury, chairman of Bhashani Front; Khondkar Golam Mortaza, chairman of National Democratic Party; Sheikh Anwarul Haque, chairman of NAP (Bhashani); Abdul Mobin, chairman of Islamic Party; Moulana Abdul Latif Nezami, secretary general of Nezam-e-Islam Party; Moulana Isha Shahedi, chairman of Islami Oikya Parishad; Moulana Mahiuddin Rabbani, acting chairman of Sammilita Olama Mashaekh Parishad; and NDP Secretary General Alamgir Majumder.

EC search

FROM PAGE 20

questions at a meeting on "Trial of Crimes against Humanity: Ensuring Transparency, Accountability and Due Process of Law" in Dhaka yesterday.

The minister said the president has formed the committee through a gazette notification after holding discussions with the opposition parties.

Gazette notification is a law according to the constitution of the republic, and therefore the search committee was formed in accordance with the law, said the minister.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) organised the dialogue at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

A gazette notification was issued on January 24 on formation of the search committee headed by Appellate Division Judge Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain.

Three other members are Justice Md Nuruzzaman, a judge of the High Court, the comptroller and auditor general, and the chairman of the Public Service Commission.

Party presidium members Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury and Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, and Joint General Secretary Mahbub Ul Alam Hanif were also present.



Hossain Mokbul Shahriar Asif, a Jatiya Party lawmaker, suffered injuries in the clash in Rangpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## 50 hurt as JP men run amok

FROM PAGE 1

Lawmaker Asif, eight journalists and seven policemen were among the injured, said Altaf Hossain, officer-in-charge of Rangpur Police Station. Of the injured, Asif with head injuries and a police sub-inspector were admitted to the very hospital while others received first aid.

Witnesses said the MP along with his party workers and followers went to the hospital to demand the jobs for JP men. After the initial clash at the barricade, employees of the hospital unitedly put up a resistance.

Around 1:30pm the JP activists tried to move towards the hospital again but police lobbed around 40 rounds of tear shells and charged truncheons on the JP activists and the hospital employees.

Officer-in-Charge Altaf

Hossain said they arrested Abu Bakar Siddique, the son of an employee of the hospital, in connection with attacking the lawmaker.

Meanwhile, Rangpur Medical College Hospital Director Toufique Islam told The Daily Star that Asif demanded 30 jobs for his men and as he refused, the MP and his men went to his office to assault him. He denied any irregularities in the appointments of the class-III and class-IV employees.

Lawmaker Asif refused to make any comment on the incident.

However, JP Presidium member Moshir Rahman Ranga and the party's Rangpur secretary general Mostafizur Rahman Mostafa denied allegations made by the hospital director. They too refused to comment on yesterday's incident.

## Leprosy on the rise

FROM PAGE 20

to a disease that has become synonymous with stigma has proved to be challenging. An infected still has the chance to be treated as pariah by the society.

Against this backdrop, the country is observing the World Leprosy Day today with the theme "Together we work for a Bangladesh without leprosy".

Some 3,800 fresh cases of infection were detected in the country in 2011 while it was around 5,000 in 2009, according to The Leprosy Mission International (Tlmi), a non-government organisation working to create awareness about the diagnosis and treatment of the disease.

Tlmi statistics show some 732 Dhaka city dwellers have leprosy, or locally known as "Kushtho Rog".

"Those are the ones that we know of, but the actual number of infected is much higher," said Jewel Baudya, project manager of Tlmi.

Usually leprosy patients suffer discrimination and humiliation in Bangladesh society. They have been denied job opportunities and many other facilities available for commoners.

For instance, the 38-year-old factory worker mentioned earlier received treatment in a Dhaka hospital before it could harm him permanently. But he refused to disclose his name

to avoid the "society's eyes".

This is not just one case. A man from Keraniganj tells his friends that the bumpy patches on his arms are allergic reactions. A middle-aged officer who received treatment for leprosy years ago still has not told his son about it.

"He did not tell anyone at the beginning," said Thomas Singha, manager at Tlmi, adding, "He [the patient] thought it was a curse and the news could bring disgrace to his family."

Although the other close family members were informed, the man refused to share the news with his son even after he had been cured, said the Tlmi manager.

Most of the worries surrounding leprosy stem from the fact that it is an airborne infection that spreads through coughing and sneezing, said Singha.

However, it is now believed that 95 percent people are naturally immune to the infection and once a patient starts the treatment, s/he is no longer infectious.

Scientists are still struggling to find an effective vaccine. If promptly identified, leprosy can be relatively easy to treat. Depending on the clinical stage, the treatment can take six to 12 months.

Leprosy treatment is free

of cost in the country, thanks to the support from the government and the World Health Organisation.

However, detecting fresh infections remains a challenge due to the lack of public awareness and the stigma believed to be attached to the disease.

The Leprosy Mission International has 500 people working in 14 districts of the country. They hold discussions, distribute leaflets and flyers to spread knowledge about the disease. Through their relentless effort, around 4,000 to 5,000 fresh cases of infection are detected every year.

Identifying the patients unaware of their infections and treating them are crucial for preventing the disease from spreading further, said Jewel Baudya of Tlmi.

The government by 2015 seeks to reduce the spread of leprosy to such level where it would not be a threat to public health, said Asheque Hossain, director of Microbacterial Disease Control division of the health ministry.

"The situation is much better in Bangladesh now," he told The Daily Star, adding that according to the government statistics, only one person out of a thousand contract leprosy in the country, except for Gaibandha district where the rate is a tad high.

## Shahjalal

FROM PAGE 20

neck and back.

"But the worst news is that the common perennial nerve of the right leg was severed," said Asad, who performed a surgery on Badrul on January 17.

The 23-year-old will never get back full strength in his right leg, the doctor said.

On January 16, Badrul, a Chhatra League activist, came under attack by Shibir men as he along with an acquaintance named Jakir, a first year student of Sylhet Leading University, went to Jangail in Sylhet to meet another friend.

A gang of 10 to 12 Shibir cadres chopped him indiscriminately with Chinese axes. Jakir, however, managed to escape and took shelter in a nearby house.

Half an hour later police came to the spot but the perpetrators had fled already, sources said.

Lying on a hospital bed and choking back tears on Friday, Badrul appealed to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to bring the culprits to justice. "We engage in politics inspired by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Is that our sin for which I am to spend the rest of my life paralysed?"

His mother Dilara Begum is now uncertain about the future of the family.

His elder brother Nurul Amin, a tailor, is the breadwinner of the family, and father Saidur Rahman has been partially paralysed since suffering stroke a year ago and is incapable of doing any work.

Dilara wants the government to bear the expenses of her son's treatment.

SUST Vice-Chancellor Saleh Uddin, contacted by The Daily Star, said, "We, the university authority, are bearing his medical expenses as much as possible but we have financial limitations. However, it is very painful to think that Badrul will never fully recover."

After Badrul filed a case on January 17 with Jalalabad Police Station, police arrested an accused named Abul Kasem, said Sub-Inspector Sanjit Das.

## Miscreants

FROM PAGE 20

Dhulivita area of Dhamrai when he was on his way to his college hostel from Dhamrai bazar by a rickshaw around 8:00pm, Jahangir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Dhamrai Police Station, told The Daily Star.

The attackers forcibly took Mohsin to a nearby housing project and chopped off the fingers including the right thumb, added the OC.

They also snatched away a mobile phone and Tk 10,000 from the victim.

Police suspected it was a pre-planned attack over previous enmity between the victim and the attackers.

## Body to probe

FROM PAGE 20

additional secretary of the Food Division, has been asked to submit its report within three working days, according to a press release.

The other members of the body are Ataur Rahman, deputy secretary of the Food Division; and Badrul Hasan, director (collection) of the food directorate.

Meanwhile, a Dhaka court yesterday granted two-day remand each to Dhaka University students Towhidul Islam and Ismat Mejbha in a case filed against them in this connection.

They were detained on Friday night from Kabi Jasim Uddin Hall of DU with two sets of the leaked question papers.

The investigation officer prayed for five-day remand, said Sirajul Islam, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station.

Members of Detective Brach of police detained eight people in Rajarhat upazila of Kurigram early on Friday for selling the leaked question papers.