

ASHUGANJ POWER STATION

# Local experts repair a unit, save forex worth Tk 10 cr

SHEIKH MD SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Brahmanbaria

Engineers and technicians of Ashuganj Power Station Company Limited (APSC) have successfully renovated its 150 MW power unit-3 in four months.

The work comprising change of the turbine blades is first of its kind by local experts in the country and saved foreign currency worth Tk 10 crore, said APSC sources.

The work started on November 14 last year and after its successful completion, the renovated unit resumed power generation

in full swing on March 18. It became essential to change the turbine blades and other faulty equipment of unit-3 that saw frequent closures since 2009, APSC sources said.

To renovate the unit, APSC authorities approached a German company that demanded Tk 10 crore as their service charge.

They proposed that a team of 22 foreign engineers, technicians and assistants would work for 100 days at APSC and they would change the faulty blades and other parts according to their own plan.

As they would not follow instructions of APSC authorities, the renovation cost was likely to be higher if 'less essential' pieces of equipment were changed.

The foreigners also informed that the work for changing the blades at the spot would create high power vibration that might cause damage to the unit and so, a separate manufacturing place might be needed for the purpose. Even the turbine would have to be sent abroad to fit the blades properly, they said.

Later the engineers and technicians of APSC

headed by its Managing Director (MD) engineer Md Nurul Alam took decision to renovate the unit locally with their own staff.

After taking approval from the high authorities, the MD started the renovation with five engineers and 15 technicians and successfully completed the work in 120 days. The work cost only Tk 15 lakh.

"Change of the turbine blades with local engineers and technicians on the plant premises has been done for the first time in our country. The renovated unit is now functioning well," he said.



PHOTO: STAR  
The 150 MW power plant-3 (inset) of Ashuganj Power Station Company Ltd resumed functioning in full swing on March 18 as local engineers and technicians successfully completed its renovation in four months. Company authorities said the accomplishment, first of its kind by local experts in the country, saved foreign currency worth Tk 10 crore.

CULTIVATION ON HUGE AREA IN PABNA

# Onion growers hope to recoup loss incurred last year

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

Farmers in the district have started onion cultivation in their lands despite incurring huge losses last season.

They are showing fresh interest as the item's production cost is lower due to low price of seeds and other materials, according to the officials at Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE).

At least 36,544 hectares of land in nine

upazilas of the district were brought under onion cultivation this year while the growers cultivated the crop on 36,040 hectares last year. However, they were hit hard by low prices.

Around 1.8 lakh hectares were brought under onion farming in the country while the highest area was cultivated in Pabna district, said Md Shahin, development officer of DAE.

Pabna has been the

highest onion producing district in the last few years because of its good soil quality, said an official of DAE.

"We are expecting 3.3 lakh tonnes of onions this year across the country", he said.

Farmers spent around Tk 10,000 on each bigha of land to produce onion this year due to low prices of seeds. They had to invest Tk 12,000 to 14,000 last year for onion cultivation on the area, said Md Abdul Malek, deputy assistant

agriculture officer of Satbaria union in Sujanagar upazila.

Md Abdul Aziz, an onion farmer of Manikhat village in Satbaria union, said "I cultivated onions on two bighas spending Tk 25,000 last year, but I did not get more than Tk 20 thousand after harvest".

"We cultivated onion again this year to recoup the loss", he added.

Md Nurul Islam, an agriculture officer in Sujanagar upazila, said onion seed was being sold at Tk 800 to 1000 a kilogram this year compared to last year's Tk 1000 to 1200.

"The labour cost is also lower this year", he pointed out.

"Tk 200 is being spent for a labourer this year while it was Tk 250 to 300 last year," he added.

Sujanagar is the highest onion producing upazila of the district, said DAE sources.

At least 12,450 hectares in Sujanagar upazila were brought under onion cultivation this year while 12,110 hectares in Santhia upazila, 2,770 in Bera upazila, 878 in Faridpur upazila, 730 in Bhangura upazila, 820 in Chatmohar, 997 in Ishwardi, 1529 in Atghoria and 4260 in Pabna Sadar, the sources added.

Md Aminul Islam said, the onion growers would be able to recoup their last year's losses if they do not face any natural calamity this season.



PHOTO: STAR  
Onion growers, who incurred a huge loss last year, have cultivated the item in Pabna this year again, with a hope to recoup the loss.

## The Daily Star - রবি ENGLISH FAIR



STAR NATIONAL DESK

Students of five schools in Khulna, Rajshahi and Jamalpur districts yesterday took part in the English language fairs held under English in Schools programme, a joint initiative of The Daily Star and mobile operator Robi.

The English language fair at HQ Pilot High School under Batiaghata upazila of Khulna district saw lively participation of over 250 students, reports our staff correspondent from Khulna.

Headmaster of the school Anil Kumar Mandol inaugurated the fair at 10:30am.

Students viewed with rapt attention as globally famous movie The Lion King was screened at the venue.

It was followed by quizzes on vocabulary, situation-based questions, extempore speeches, role play and etiquette test.

Eighteen 18 students took part in extempore speeches, role play and vocabulary test on the occasion.

Gour Hari Bairagi, English teacher of the school, judged performance of students.

Over 300 students of Government Laboratory School in Rajshahi yesterday took part in the English language fairs held under English in Schools programme, reports our Rajshahi University correspondent.

Globally renowned movie The Lion King was screened, followed by quizzes on vocabulary, situation-based question answer, extempore speech and role play.

Twenty-nine students participated in different competitions including vocabulary test, situation-based questions, extempore speech and role play.

Students of the school took part in joyful interactions and watched the events based on the movie.

Md Abdul Jobbar Mandal, assistant teacher of Government Laboratory School, inaugurated the programmes at the school auditorium while Nilu Shamsun Nahar,



PHOTO: STAR  
Students of Rajshahi Government Laboratory High School get engrossed while watching globally renowned movie Lion King that was screened at the school auditorium during the English language fair.

## Kids from more schools join a joyous day

assistant headmaster of the school, distributed prizes among 18 winners of different events.

Our Jamalpur correspondent adds: About two hundred students of Jamalpur Government Girls' High school, Singhjani Multi-purpose High School and Beltia High School in Jamalpur town took part in the English language fair held at the girls' school yesterday.

Md Rajuan, headmaster of Jamalpur Government Girls' High School, inaugurated the programme.

Globally renowned movie The Lion King was screened followed by quiz-

zes on vocabulary, situation-based questions, extempore speeches and role play.

Students of the three schools watched the events based on the movie and took part in joyful interactions.

Ten students took part in role play event while nine others participated in the quizzes based on the movie.

Later prizes were distributed among the winners.

Teachers praised the role of English in schools programme in helping rural children to learn English with ease.

Aiming to promote English language learning

among school students across the country, The Daily Star in cooperation with Robi undertook English in Schools programme in 2009.

Under the initiative, each of one thousand schools selected from 64 districts of the country receives three complimentary copies of The Daily Star five days a week.

The ongoing English language fairs at different schools are being held in coordination with the education ministry as part of the three-year-long programme.

Adcom Ltd is the creative and event partner of the fairs.



PHOTO: STAR  
A scene from the English language fair at HQ Pilot High School in Batiaghata upazila under Khulna district yesterday.

## C&F men call off strike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore

Benapole port's C&F agent employees union has called off indefinite strike scheduled to begin today.

The decision was taken at a meeting between the port authorities and C&F agents' association, transport owners association and C&F agent employees union at the land port yesterday.

The strike was called off as the port authorities assured the employees of withdrawing the case filed against some 200 workers of C&F agents.

The port authorities filed the case on Wednesday following an untoward incident that left the land port office vandalised.

Later, Nasir Uddin, general secretary of the union announced the strike after an emergency meeting on Thursday night.

## Protesters attack PS after abductors kill boy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Police recovered the body of a primary school student, who was abducted two days ago, from an under construction house in front of Rangpur Cadet College yesterday afternoon.

Hearing the news, several hundred people besieged and attacked Panchagarh police station at around 4:00pm, leaving two policemen injured, said duty officer ASI Belal Hossain.

Police fired about 50 tear gas shells to disperse the agitated crowd, he said. During the clash with police, people also vandalised 15/20 vehicles, halting vehicular movement on all routes.

Additional police forces have been deployed in the town to avert fresh untoward incident, OC Humayun Kabir said.

Sub-Inspector of Panchagarh police station, also investigation officer of the case, Rezaul Karim told this correspondent over cell phone that criminals kidnapped Md Jewel, 10, son of Abdur Rahim Khoka on Sunday on his way to school in Panchagarh town.

Later, the gang made a phone call in the evening to victim's father Abdur Rahim, a small trader of second hand clothes and banana, and demanded Tk 2 lakh as ransom for release of the boy. They also asked him to go to Rangpur alone with the money.

Rahim went to

Rangpur on Sunday night with Tk 25,000 but the gang did not turn up and their cell phone was off. Victim's father returned empty handed.

Yesterday morning, police arrested Munna, son of Rafiqul Islam, tenant of Abdur Rahim, on suspicion. According to his confession, police went to Rangpur and recovered the body from an under constructed house in front of Rangpur Cadet College at 3:00pm.

Police arrested Muna's father Rafiqul Islam, 50, mother Morium Begum, 45, and sister Munni Begum, 17. They came from Dauakandi village under Shibpur upazila in Narsingdi district and rented Abdur Rahim's house a few months ago.