

North Korea on collision course

Pursues fuelling rocket defying pressure

AFP, Tokyo

North Korea has reportedly begun fuelling a rocket for a launch next month, defying calls to abort an event the West says is a disguised missile test, as the United States suspended planned food aid.

"The launch is coming closer. The possibility is high that the launch date will be set for April 12 or 13," Japan's Tokyo Shimbun reported yesterday, quoting a source "close to the government" in Pyongyang.

It cited the source as saying that North Korea had begun injecting liquid fuel into the rocket.

South Korea's defence ministry said Sunday the North has transported the main body of the rocket to a site in the far northwest of the country in preparation for blast-off.

Japan's newspapers pay close attention to North Korea and often break stories on the secretive state. South Korea's Joint Chief of Staff said it could not confirm the report.

North Korea insisted this week it would go ahead with what it calls a peaceful satellite launch, snubbing a call from US President Barack Obama to drop the plan and accusing him of a "confrontational mindset".

The West and North Korea's Asian neighbours have urged the nuclear-armed state to scrap the launch, which is seen as a pretext for testing ballistic missile technology that is banned under UN resolutions.

The North insists it has a right to launch a civilian satellite and says it will estimate crop yields and collect weather data.

Maldives ex-leader urges vote on US show

AFP, New York

The recently ousted president of Maldives on Wednesday pressed for new elections and urgent action on climate change as he took his often lonely campaign to a top-watched US television show.

Mohamed Nasheed, promoting a new film on his fight against climate change, appeared on "The Late Show with David Letterman," where the host started by offering the audience a quick introduction to the Indian Ocean archipelago.

Nasheed, who became Maldives' first democratically elected leader following multi-party elections in October 2008, insisted his resignation last month was due to a coup by supporters of former strongman Maumoon Abdul Gayoom.

"We want a free and fair election. We want your government to back that. We were shocked to see that the United States government was so quick in recognizing" the new government, Nasheed said.

Nasheed has said that he was ousted after some 300 soldiers, backed by Islamic radicals and local businessmen, staged a mutiny that capped three weeks of anti-government protests.

The United States, the European Union and India have all called for early elections. But the new administration of President Mohamed Waheed says an early vote is not possible unless all parties agree to amend the constitution.

Nasheed was visiting the United States for the release of the documentary "The Island President," an account of his diehard international campaign to fight global warming.

Foreign choice to cost more

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on 79 items. However, eight items including SIM card, mobile phone, scratch card and TV have been excluded from that list.

A finance ministry official said several measures have recently been taken to ease pressure on the foreign currency reserve. The Bangladesh Bank has also advised the banks to discourage import of luxury items.

The NBR official added total import of the 71 items last year was worth Tk 6,430 crore. After increasing the tax the NBR expects that import will decrease by about Tk 1,000 crore.

However, as a result of the tax increase, in next three months the government may earn revenue of about Tk 300 crore.

FRUITS

Various types of nuts, dates, figs, pineapples, avocados, guavas, mangoes, mangosteens, citrus fruits (fresh or dried),

oranges, mandarins, grapes, lemons and limes, grapes, apples and pears have come under new tax.

BAKERY AND CONFECTIONERY ITEMS
Fresh duty has been imposed on sugar confectionery including chewing gums, chocolates, other food preparations containing cocoa, bread, pastry, cakes, biscuits and other bakers' items. Wafers and similar products, rusks will also be pricier.

Prices of different varieties of juice and water including fruit juice, vegetable juices, orange juice, grapefruit juice, pineapple juice, tomato juice, soya sauce, tomato ketchup and other tomato sauce, mustard flour, water including natural and artificial mineral water, and non-alcoholic beverage will also go up.

BUILDING MATERIALS
Increased tax has been imposed on marble, travertine, blocks or slabs of rectangular shape, granite, basalt,

sandstone and other monument/buildingstones.

PAPERS
Cigarette papers, toilet paper and similar paper, sanitary towels, napkins, handkerchiefs, cleansing tissues, towels, tablecloths, clothing accessories of paper pulp have seen new duty.

ELECTRONICS AND OTHERS

Prices of air conditioning machines, both household and compressor type refrigerators, freezers of ches type, showcase and the like for storage and display incorporating refrigerating and freezing equipment, chests, cabinets, display counters will increase.

Motorcycle and motor parts, motorcycles in CBU with four-stroke engines have come under fresh duty.

GARMET ITEMS

Fresh duty on foreign made high-priced garment items including lehenga, sari, bedsheets, etc has been imposed.

US official due Apr 5 KEPTZ in crisis

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government officials, opposition leaders and civil society members.

Sherman is the third-highest ranking official in the US State Department. This will be her first visit to Bangladesh after being appointed to the post on September 21, 2011.

The two-day official tour is being considered crucial as this will be the highest-level visit by any US government official in recent years.

US Ambassador in Dhaka Dan W Mozena called on Foreign Minister Dipu Moni yesterday to discuss the preparation of US official's visit on April 5-6.

Emerging from the meeting with Dipu Moni, Mozena told reporters that the under secretary will meet Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia and others.

In reply to a query, the ambassador said Sherman

will visit a site of Grameen Bank or Brac during her trip to a village.

Asked about the purpose of the visit, Mozena said the main objective of the US official's visit is to further strengthen the bilateral ties.

"We have a very strong relationship and she [Sherman] will discuss with the leaders of Bangladesh bilateral issues," he added.

Meanwhile, a press release of the foreign ministry said Ambassador Mozena briefed the foreign minister about the upcoming visit of Sherman.

Dipu Moni also discussed the long-outstanding issue of repatriation of AM Rashed Chowdhury, the convicted killer of the Bangabandhu who is currently residing in USA.

The US ambassador deeply appreciated the recent initiative of the government in conferring honours on the friends of Bangladesh's Liberation War.

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Munir Chowdhury yesterday issued an order in this effect on the KEPZ president and asked them to stop all kinds of land development activities including hill cutting, said a press release.

Contacted, a high official of the KEPZ told The Daily Star that they were yet to get the letter.

The clearance was issued in November 2009 and was renewed in 2011.

The regulator's statement, however, said if the KEPZ authorities file application for a clearance they would reconsider its issuance under conditions of strict compliance for the sake of industrialisation.

It said a team of the DoE led by Minir Chowdhury during a visit at Patiya and Anwara of the KEPZ area on January 22 found the activities of hill cutting in Deyang, Bara Uthan and Bandar areas.

They seized three bulldozers and soil carrying

trucks temporarily and directed the authorities to stop hill cutting.

Though the hill cutting was stopped following the drive, a DoE team during a surprise visit to Badalpara area near Marine Drive on March 24 found activities of hill cutting and filling of water bodies, and seized 10 bulldozers.

For razing hills, the DoE also filed cases against 12 persons including three high officials of the KEPZ with Karnaphuli Police Station under Environment Protection Act 1995 (amendment-2010).

The DoE statement said the team found several irregularities in the project documents that defy the conditions of the clearance including cutting of hills instead of dressing those and not following the land development plan cited in the environmental impact assessment.

PM speaks against caretaker system

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working independently and neutrally, she said.

The prime minister said all 5,175 polls, including mayoral elections to three city corporations, that were held under her government, were free, fair and neutral.

Speaking against the restoration of the caretaker system, Hasina said unwanted events had happened during the tenures of all caretaker governments since its inception in 1996.

There had been a coup attempt during the tenure of Justice Habibur Rahman-led caretaker government. Besides, incidents of killings and torture happened during the tenure of Justice Latifur Rahman's caretaker government, said Hasina.

"And the last caretaker government ruled the country for two years."

Hasina, also the chief of ruling Awami League, asked

how the Opposition Leader and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia could forget those.

In her 35-minute speech, she argued that caretaker system was scrapped through an amendment to the constitution in line with a Supreme Court verdict.

The leader of the House said the opposition joined parliament only to ensure that they continue to receive financial benefits.

"They used indecent, vulgar and abusive language in parliament. Some of their members even moved to assault one of our female lawmakers," said Hasina.

And now the opposition is vandalising vehicles and using abusive language in the streets in the name of waging movement against the government.

Claiming that the present parliament is fully functional, she said, "I don't agree with those

who are saying that the parliament is not working properly."

She outright rejected the opposition's claim that her government had failed to run the country.

Hasina criticised the media, saying, "It is dishing out anything at will -- true or false."

Referring to Bangladesh's

maritime disputes with India, Hasina said if her party is voted to power through the 2014 polls, it would ensure that Bangladesh gets its maritime rights.

She also urged people not to waste electricity.

The twelfth session of the ninth parliament was prorogued yesterday.

Electricity price hiked

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As a result, power tariff for bulk clients increased by 7.49 per cent from Tk 3.74/kilowatt-hour to Tk 4.02 a unit and for retail users by 6.25 per cent from Tk 5.02 to Tk 5.32 a unit.

This is the third rise in electricity prices in the last four months.

Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) Chairman Syed Yusuf Hossain announced the new prices at his Karwan Bazar office in the city.

"This hike is for fuel cost adjustment. Government subsidies for petroleum-based power plants went up following the latest rise in oil prices in the international market," he noted.

Electricity tariff for bulk consumers rose by Tk 0.47 per unit on December 1 and by Tk 0.40 per unit on February 1.

The retail tariff soared by Tk 0.55 per unit on December 1 and Tk 0.31 on February 1.

State-run distribution entities Dhaka Power Distribution Company, Dhaka Electric Supply Company, Rural Electrification Board and West Zone Power Distribution Company are bulk buyers of the Power Development

Board (PDB). Besides, there are 1.3 crore consumers in the country.

The average production cost of a unit of electricity is Tk 5.70, according to PDB.

Experts have emphasized improving the supply-side management and efficiency of power plants, instead of opting for repeated hike in power prices.

Contacted, former caretaker government adviser Akbar Ali Khan said apparently it seems the hike is not so high. "But the frequent change in prices is only creating inflationary expectations."

"As a result, the price of commodities will go up without any corresponding substantive reason," he observed.

The main reason for the high subsidies is that the electricity producers are not efficient. As a result their cost of production is high, pointed out Akbar.

The tariff hikes are part of the government's move to slash its subsidies for the electricity generation.

According to official estimates, the government in the current fiscal year is set to spend Tk 20,000 crore in subsidies for the power sector.

New system, old result

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Like Faruk, other travellers also complained that they were in long queues for several hours, but the tickets were sold out before they reached the counter. This is an everyday affair, they said.

Abu Bakar Siddique who failed to buy a ticket from the counter said, "A man offered me a ticket for Dhaka bound train Subarna Express on the station premises."

Another passenger, Qazi Shamim Hasan, who on February 25 could not get any ticket from the counter, said, "But I found two men trying to sell tickets at a high rate in front of the tea stalls at the station gate."

He ultimately bought a Tk 150 ticket for Dhaka for Tk 350 from a scalper.

Chittagong Railway Station Manager AA Samsur Rahman however claimed that since the introduction of the new rule, ticket scalping stopped. The tickets are running out quick because of a rush of buyers, he said.

But his statement was proven wrong when on March 23 angry ticket seekers besieged him in his office room for more than an hour till Rapid Action Battalion arrived at the scene and calmed the situation.

The demonstrators said ticket sale began at 9:00am and around 9:20am the

booking clerk announced that all advanced tickets for air-conditioned cars of Dhaka bound Turna Nishita and Mahangar Godhuli for March 26 were sold out.

On March 22 Government Railway Police (GRP) arrested a ticket scalper red-handed from Chittagong Railway Station.

GRP arrested another black marketer on March 6, and Bangladesh Railway (BR) East Zone authority suspended three Chittagong Railway Station officials on March 3 in connection with ticket scalping.

High officials of BR at a media conference on March 26 in Chittagong said they

blacklisted around 6,500 mobile phone numbers of suspected ticket scalpers.

General Manager of BR East Zone Yusuf Ali Mridha said they, in an investigation, found that certain mobile phone users have been buying a lot of tickets in advance and selling those on the black market at much higher prices.

The rail authorities also found that black marketers are taking advantage of the e-ticketing system through which a person can remotely buy advance return tickets using BR's internal wide area electronic communication network. The scalpers have also been buying a large

quota of such e-tickets, said BR officials adding that as a preventive measure they have restricted e-ticket booking hours.

Under the restriction, e-ticket purchase will remain suspended between 9:00am and 11:00am daily.

Mohammed Shahjahan, additional director general (operation) of BR, said, "In addition to addressing the ticket problems, Bangladesh Railway will increase the number of cars in all four daily Dhaka-Chittagong trains within a short period time."

Mahbubur Rahman Khan, station master of Chittagong Railway station,

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

National Program Officer, Child Survival & Women's Health

In order to manage and guide the MI's programs that are linked to health systems primarily Vitamin A supplementation (VAS), Zinc and ORS supplementation and Iron Folate Program in Bangladesh, **Micronutrient Initiative (MI)** requires the services of a **National Program Officer, Child Survival and Women's Health**.

Key Duties and Responsibilities:

- Coordinate the overall planning & management of the MI's VAS and zinc and ORS supplementation and Iron Folate Programs in Bangladesh;
- Develop project plans and budgets;
- Develop Terms of Reference related to various program components;
- Coordinate with key players which include Director General of Health Services (DGHS), Director General of Family Planning (DGFP);
- Facilitate the government in strengthening training and monitoring systems;
- Facilitate the government in strengthening training, communication and monitoring systems at the sub-national level through extensive monthly field visits, meetings and workshop modes.
- Manage/ supervise partners/ staff/consultants required to work on the health system linked programs;
- Write documents and provide inputs on reports to donors-and other stakeholders;

Education/Professional Designations/Experience/Skills:

- A professional degree in medicine, health systems management, nutrition, public health, international development and/or a related field.
- A good understanding of human nutrition, the role of micronutrients and/or experience in working with the Health Systems would be a plus.
- Good knowledge of government policies and programs to address nutrition.
- At least 10 years of work experience with national and district governments, NGOs, community groups and/or UN agencies (preferably a combination of experience in at least two of these).
- Strong communication skills. Ability to effectively represent the program in various fora.
- Fluency in English (reading, writing & oratory skills) is a prerequisite.
- Good computer skills, including MS Office programs.

Duration : 2 years (extension based on performance and fund availability)

Only short listed candidates will be called for a written test and interview. The application should include a cover letter, an updated CV, the expected remuneration and names and contact coordinates of two referees. The application should reach the following address by **April 15, 2012**:

Program Support Unit (PSU), H-19, R-3, Block-K, Baridhara, Dhaka-1212

Please mention the name of the position on the top left corner of the envelope. If you have any queries, please email to: **jamil@cidapsudhaka.org**
(Only the hard copies of the application and the CV will be accepted.)



INVITATION FOR TENDER (IFT)

33/11 KV, 2 MVA Sub-Station at Joydevpur, Gazipur

Project Name	BRAC Dairy & Food Project & BPP (Through C&M)
Source of Fund	Own Fund
Tender Package No.	CON-BDFP02-12
IFT Ref. no. and Date	IFT/BRAC/BPD-CON(BDFP)12-05, March 21, 2012
Tender Name	Delivery, installation, testing & commissioning of 33/11 KV, 2MVA SUB-STATION
Time for Completion of Delivery	Within 30 days from the date of Contract.
Eligibility of Tenderers	Experience in delivery, installation, testing and commissioning of Sub-Station Equipment.
Price of the tender documents	BDT 2,000.00 (Taka Two thousand only) (Non-refundable)
Amount of Tender Security	BDT 2,50,000.00 (Taka Two lac fifty thousand only)
Name and address of the Office(s) Selling Tender Document	Accounts Department (8th floor), BRAC Center, 75 Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212. (Visit the link http://www.brac.net/content/stay-informed-procurement-notices for study purpose only)
Name and address of the Office Receiving Tenders	Tender Box-1, Ground floor, BRAC Procurement Department, BRAC Center, 75 Mohakhali, Dhaka.
Name and address of the Office Opening Tenders	BRAC Staff Cafeteria, 4 th floor, BRAC Center, 75 Mohakhali, Dhaka
Last Date and Time for Selling Tender Document	01 April, 2012 - 10 April, 2012 Between 0900 hrs to 1500 hrs. (During office hours)
Last date and Time for Submission of Tenders	15 April, 2012 Between 0900 hours to 1500 hours.
Date and Time for Opening of Tenders	15 April, 2012 At 1530 hours.

BRAC Procurement Department, BRAC Centre, 75 Mohakhali, Dhaka 1212, Phone: 9881265 Ext 3021/3034



Walk-in-Interview

BRAC Agriculture and Food Security Programme is looking for competent and self-motivated individuals to attend a **Walk-in-Interview** for the following regular position.

Sector Specialist (Production)

Job Description:

- Select Production Block by identifying suitable land to produce specific varieties of seed.
- Prepare training materials and conduct training for the enlisted farmers to produce selected varieties of seed.
- Visit to the farmland to follow-up the seed production activities to ensure quality seed production and make necessary measures when required.
- Prepare report and submit to the authority periodically.

Job Specification:

Masters with 4 years Bachelor degree in Agriculture from any recognized university with minimum 2nd division/ class/ CGPA 2.00 in all academic examinations.
Excellent written and verbal communication skills both in English and Bangla.
Age : Minimum 27 years.
Salary : Tk. 18,515/- per month.
Job Location: Field Offices.

Benefits: Insurance, Festival Bonus, Gratuity, Contributory Provident Fund and Others.
If you feel, you are the right person for the above position, please reach at the venue as per the following schedule for a **Walk-in-Interview**.
Friday, April 06, 2012 at BLC Uttara, Ashkona (Opposite to Hazi Camp), Uttara, Dhaka-1230 at 9:30 am.

Please bring the following particulars at the time of Walk-in-Interview:
- Detailed CV and a cover letter justifying your qualification for the position.
- All of your original academic certificates and National ID Card with photocopy.
- 3 (three) copies of recent passport size color photographs.
Please enlist your name at 9:30 am at the venue of interview. Successful candidates will be communicated over the phone.
Women are especially encouraged to apply.

BRAC is an equal opportunity employer