

NEWS IN

brief

‘Rental power plants suicidal’

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Terming quick rental power plant suicidal for the nation’s economy, the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Port yesterday demanded reopening of all closed state-run power plants and repair of the rest to boost electricity production.

The leaders of the committee told a press conference at the capital’s Mukti Bhawan that it would be possible to produce 2,400-megawatt additional power from the existing structure if the government reopened and repaired all its closed power plants.

Engineer Sheikh Mohammad Shahidullah, Prof Anu Mohammad, columnist Syed Abul Maksud and Ruhin Hossain Prince spoke on the occasion.

SM Hall alumni reunion May 11

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The annual general meeting (AGM) and reunion of Salimullah Muslim Hall Alumni Association of Dhaka University will be held at TSC auditorium on May 11, says a press release.

Former students of the department, who are interested to join, have been requested to get registered with Tk 500 (single student), Tk 600 (couple) and Tk 200 (drivers).

For registration and new membership, interested alumni can contact Syed Arifuzzaman Soif at 01711831802 and Md Hasan at 01759955920.

Indian minister to attend Nazrul's birthday celebrations

BSS, Kolkata

India does not want to repeat a mistake it made last year when it launched poet Rabindranath Tagore’s 150th birth anniversary celebrations jointly with Bangladesh but forgot to honour poet Kazi Nazrul Islam.

A senior cabinet minister is scheduled to travel to Dhaka in the second half of next month to attend the 113th birth anniversary celebrations of poet Nazrul, sources said.

The trip will follow that of Indian Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee who is scheduled to visit Bangladesh in the first week of May to attend the closing ceremony of the year-long Tagore celebrations. The events related to Nazrul will take place in Dhaka on May 24-25.

HIDING OF BACHCHU RAJAKAR

Be cautious of double-dealers

HR body boss asks govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should keep aware of “double-dealers”, as such people might have helped Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, known as Bachchu Razakar, sneak into India, National Human Rights Commission Chairman Prof Mizanur Rahman said yesterday.

“Rab and detectives can tell everything about daily activities of criminals. Can’t they say how Bachchu Razakar escaped? What can be done if devil is in the system?” he asked, and advised that the government get itself rid of such people who had links to anti-liberation groups.

Law Minister Barrister Shafique Ahmed said, “Law will follow its own trajectory. Criminals will be punished no matter wherever they stay”.

Expressing worries over slow pace of the war crimes trial, the NHRC chief said there was no time to waste. The nation will be freed from the culture of impunity once the criminals are punished, he added.

The law minister assured that the war crimes trial would complete in time and in the proper way.

The minister made the assurance at a discussion on “the 41st Anniversary of the Proclamation of Independence and Constitution of Bangladesh”. Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee (Forum for Secular Bangladesh and Trial of War Criminals of 1971) organised the programme at the Women’s Voluntary Association (WVA) auditorium.

Prof Mizanur said the Proclamation of Independence was written so logically that even if the country’s constitution was destroyed, the nation’s self-identity would remain unscathed.

Eminent jurist Barrister M Amir-ul Islam, vice-president of the nirmul committee Shahidjaya Shyamali Nasrin Chowdhury, journalist Kamal Lohani, and Barrister Dr Turin Afroz also spoke at the discussion.



PHOTO: STAR

People crowd Rajshahi Railway Station yesterday to catch a train amidst a two-day bus strike that followed a clash between CNG-run three-wheeler and bus workers in Rajshahi on Saturday.

PLAIN LAND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Separate land commission stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rights activists in the country yesterday stressed the need for the formation of a separate land commission to solve long standing land disputes of indigenous communities living on the plains.

They said that influential quarters were taking advantage of the non-availability of proper documents and records to grab land from indigenous communities with the help of corrupt land record officials.

The activists were speaking at a seminar titled ‘Using common resources by the ethnic minorities of Barind Tracts: Problems and potentialities’.

Advancement of Marginalised Adivasis Deprived of Economic Resources (AMADER) Project -- a government initiative supported by donor agency and implemented by development organisation NETZ to reduce extreme poverty of marginalised communities in Barind Tracts -- organised the seminar at the

city’s Cirdap auditorium.

Joint management of available common resources by indigenous community, local people and development organisations can upgrade the living standard of indigenous people, speakers said.

Addressing the seminar, former adviser to caretaker government advocate Sultana Kamal emphasised on joint efforts of the government, political parties and NGOs to end discrimination against indigenous people.

She suggested that indigenous people should unite at all levels to communicate effectively with policymakers to secure their rights.

Barrister Sara Hossain, honorary director of Blast (Bangladesh Legal Aid and Service Trust), emphasised on arranging legal aid service for the marginalised communities to protect their lands and rights.

Presenting a paper, academician and researcher Dr Meghna Guhathakurta and Dr Korban Ali

showed that the insufficient and inefficient legal structure and judicial system, corruption in land records and lack of understanding about common resources are the major causes of conflict between indigenous people and Bengalis, and sometimes even within the indigenous communities.

Speakers also placed several points of recommendations including formation of a separate land commission for plain land indigenous communities, setting up of special tribunals at district level and creation of awareness about legal provisions to solve land disputes.

Joint secretary of LGRD and Cooperatives Ministry’s Asadul Islam, Executive Director of Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) Shamsul Huda, AMADER Project Director Manzurul Karim, among others, also spoke at the seminar attended by NGO officials and development activists.



The family member of a victim, who died in the grenade attack on an Awami League rally at Habiganj in Sylhet in 2005, appreciates Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina while receiving a cheque from her at the PMO yesterday. The PM was distributing donations among the family members of those who died in the grenade attack which killed former finance minister and AL leader Shah AMS Kibria.

PHOTO: PMO

Municipalities not independent

Say mayors at convention

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Though the government speaks of strengthening local government bodies, mayors of the country’s 311 municipalities have to largely depend on the ministry concerned for their development activities.

At a convention of Municipality Association of Bangladesh (MAB), the mayors also said the LGRD ministry is yet to formulate any rules even after two and a half years of the passage of the local government (municipality) act, 2009.

“I even had to write to the secretary of the ministry [LGRD] to get permission to sell a tree in my area that fall down ten months back on a stormy day,” said Mahbubur Rahman, mayor of Bogra municipality.

At the convention, many mayors like Mahbubur shared their bad experience on implementation of development activities.

Around 300 mayors and 200 councilors took part in the daylong event organised by MAB at the LGED auditorium.

“It was the ministry’s job to formulate a monetary allocation policy through which the ministry will allocate fund to municipalities. But they are yet to formulate it,” Shamim Al Razi, secretary general of MAB, also mayor of Singra municipality, told The Daily Star.

He said in absence of a policy, the government often acts partisan, while allocating funds and aids to his municipality.

Abu Yusuf Chowdhury, mayor of Matiranga municipality, said he often gets less amount of fund from the ministry as he supports the opposition party.

Speaking at the convention, Ajmat Ullah Khan, president of MAB, said there are some sections in the municipality law which is contradictory to the constitution.

Protect rights of Bengalis in Assam

CPI (M) urges Indian govt

STAR REPORT

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) has called for legal measures to protect the rights of Bengalis from erstwhile East Bengal (now Bangladesh) and a solution through judicial process to the problem of suspected foreigners living illegally in Assam, an Indian newspaper reported yesterday.

In a resolution adopted at its 20th party congress, CPI (M) urged the Indian government to honour Prime Minister Manmohan Singh’s promise of sympathetically considering the legitimate demand of a large number of Bengali refugees from erstwhile East Bengal to be recognised as Indian citizens, said the Hindu report.

Noting that a large number of the refugees belonged to the Scheduled Castes, the resolution said exclusion of these communities from the current Aadhar drive of citizen identification had only heightened their insecurity.

Recalling the support extended by all political parties during a discussion in Parliament on the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2003 for an amendment to protect these refugees, the resolution said the law still considered these refugees as illegal migrants.

Terming them victims of historical circumstances, the resolution said there were cases where they were treated like criminals.

Demanding that an amendment to the Act in relation to the Bangladesh minority community refugees be brought in the coming budget session of Parliament, the resolution said the amendment should be introduced while protecting the Assam accord.

Another resolution adopted by the congress said the continuing problem of marking as D-voters (doubtful voters) in electoral polls the names of those who were suspected to be foreigners, entering and living illegally in Assam, was a

matter of serious concern.

Calling for a judicial process to find a solution to the problem, the resolution stated that most of the Foreigners’ Tribunals set up to identify illegal foreigners were non-functioning.

There were many occasions when ex parte judgments were pronounced against many genuine Indian citizens classifying them as foreigners.

Citing a Gauhati High Court judgment in April 2011, directing all D-voters to be transferred to the Foreigners’ Tribunals and be kept in detention camps till their cases were disposed of, the resolution said the situation had worsened for these people since then.

Though there was a stay order, the Assam administration was serving fresh notices on a large number of people belonging to the religious and linguistic minorities, resulting in harassment of Bengali and Nepali-speaking people.

New Bangladesh Consulate opens in Istanbul

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT


Bangladesh’s bilateral ties with Turkey, the 16th largest economy of the world, received a boost up yesterday with the opening of the new Bangladesh Consulate General in Istanbul.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni inaugurated the consulate, which was initiated as per understandings reached between the prime ministers of Bangladesh and Turkey in their Dhaka talks in November 2010.

Speaking at the inaugural session, Dipu Moni said the establishment of the Bangladesh Consulate General in Istanbul was a testimony to the ever-growing trade and economic relations between Bangladesh and Turkey.

She hoped that the new outpost would be critical in promoting the interests of bilateral trade and investment of the two countries.

Members of the Bangladesh business and investment delegation, who are currently visiting Turkey as part of the Bangladeshi prime minister’s entourage, as well as the Turkish business community also attended the programme, said a foreign ministry press release yesterday.



WEATHER  
TODAY

### Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions with moderately heavy to heavy falls at places in 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may fall slightly and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

The highest temperature is likely to be 32-33 degrees Celsius and lowest temperature may be 18-20 degrees Celsius.

**The sun sets in the capital at 6:19pm today and rises at 5:40am tomorrow.**

Country’s highest temperature 33.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Khulna and lowest 16.4 degrees at Srirangal.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	29.0	19.0	67	64
Chittagong	31.8	20.0	74	82
Rajshahi	28.4	20.6	88	66
Rangpur	23.2	20.8	81	77
Khulna	33.0	19.0	83	92
Barisal	32.2	20.8	79	85
Sylhet	28.5	19.0	80	93
Cox’ Bazar	32.0	20.8	64	73