

Charge mobile

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They used a T-shirt bought from a local discount store, which was soaked in a solution of fluoride, dried and then baked in an oxygen-free environment at high temperature.

The fibres in the fabric converted from cellulose to activated carbon during the process, but the material remained flexible.

By using small parts of the fabric as an electrode, the researchers showed that the material could be made to act as a capacitor.

Capacitors store an electrical charge and are components of nearly every electronic device on the market.

By coating the individual fibres of the carbonised fabric with manganese oxide just a nanometre thick, the electrode performance of the fabric was further enhanced.

"This created a stable, high-performing supercapacitor," said Prof Li.

The hybrid supercapacitors proved resilient -- even after thousands of charge-discharge cycles their performance did not diminish more than 5%, the researchers said.

"By stacking these supercapacitors up, we should be able to charge portable electronic devices such as cell phones," Prof Lisaid.

"We wear fabric every day. One day our cotton T-shirts could have more functions; for example, a flexible energy storage device that could charge your cell phone or your iPad," Prof Li added.

The researchers wrote up their findings for the

POWER PURCHASE

Dhaka, Delhi start talks on draft deal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

A draft agreement on Bangladesh's purchase of 250 megawatt power from India is expected to be finalised at the two-day talks that began in New Delhi yesterday between officials of the two countries.

Ahead of the talks, Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) Chairman Alamgir Kabir told newsmen here that the draft would come up at the meeting and is expected to be finalised.

India's state-owned National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) will export 250MW of power to Bangladesh from the unallocated quota available with the Indian power ministry.

The BPDB chairman said some Indian companies have responded to the tender floated by Bangladesh on purchasing another 250MW of power from open market in India.

The transmission systems between the two nations are expected to be completed by the end of July, 2013.

The electrical grid inter-

connection between the two countries would be through a link between the eastern region of India and the western grid of Bangladesh.

The meeting between BPDB and NTPC would discuss expediting work on setting up of 1,320MW thermal power plant in Khulna and it is expected that work on the project would start in six months, the BPDB chairman said.

The project, he said, is expected to be completed in four years.

The BPDB chief said the meeting would also discuss Bangladesh's participation in joint venture power projects in northeastern Indian states, as agreed to by the two countries earlier this year at a meeting of the power secretaries in New Delhi.

India has offered Bangladesh acquiring stakes in some power plants in its northeastern states, including Tripura.

NTPC has signed an initial agreement with BPDB in 2010 for setting up two thermal power plants of 1,320 MW each at Khulna and Chittagong at an estimated cost of Rs 6,600 crore.

Road repair

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(RHD) officials for their lack of commitment in repairing the roads, Obaidul asked, "Why do you repair roads before my visit?"

To accelerate the repair work of potholes and tar-mac, the minister instructed the RHD to form "mobile units" so that the roads across the country remained usable during the monsoon.

The instructions came on the second day of three-day conference of the DCs at the Secretariat in the capital.

The minister also stressed for improved facilities of public toilets at roadside restaurants, petrol pumps and CNG stations as the number of highway commuters increases with the Eid approaching.

Many DCs demanded that the executive engineers of the RHD be put under their jurisdiction as the officials often did not listen to them.

Several DCs suggested installation of load restriction machines all over the country to protect roads and bridges from getting damaged due to unabated overloading of vehicles.

The minister regretted that many projects under the communications ministry were either being delayed or stalled "for not getting allocation timely".

"The Planning Commission sanctions a very little amount of the required fund which is hampering implementation of the projects," he told the conference, requesting the authorities concerned to remove the complications in fund release.

The minister also blamed the DCs for delay in acquiring land for different projects, and urged the chief executives of the field level administration to make the acquisition process easy and fast.

India eyes

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seven to eight years, said the report.

Vijay Saraswat, chief of DRDO, unveiled the first pictures of the Indian Unmanned Strike Air Vehicle (IUSAV), code-named Aura, at a seminar in Linkoping, Sweden that resembles classified experimental Cold War aircraft has ever been known to attempt.

While the prospect and development of such an aircraft is enormously complicated, IUSAV is being built for a simple mission profile: Take off under remote control by a ground crew, enter enemy airspace undetected and virtually invisible to enemy radars, deploy strike weapons against designated targets and return to base.

In one official document, the Aura is described as "unmanned self-defending reconnaissance aircraft", indicating that it will also serve as a spy platform capable of evading missiles if fired upon.

The secret Aura programme currently functions on a Rs100-crore start-up budget for the design and definition phase. A top officer associated with the programme indicates that the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA)-a consortium of agencies including DRDO labs and Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd-was hoping to complete a major chunk of the complex project for just under a billion dollars.

However, India has conveyed in no uncertain terms that it wants a platform with as little foreign assistance as possible, and strictly no foreign help in any of the critical design areas and sub-systems.

As things stand, IUSAV is only the latest in a healthy list of similar 'flying wing' stealth drones being developed across the world.

Muhith for taking

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College hostel.

In a statement issued yesterday, Muhith, a lawmaker from Sylhet-1 constituency, termed the incident "shameful".

"A group of terrorists are involved in different crimes in the area. They are doing all the misdeeds and managing political cover whenever needed," the minister claimed adding that criminals had no political platform. "They take advantage of parties for every crime."

He said the Awami League leaders in Sylhet demanded legal actions against those responsible for the incident. "I have also talked to the officials and asked them to take measures under special powers act against those who led the incident, without considering political affiliation," the minister said in the statement.

Condemning the heinous incident, Muhith said, "I am sad to see that the administration and the police killed

much time to stop the disorder."

Muhith and Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid are scheduled to visit the college campus this afternoon.

At least 20 people were injured as the activists of Awami League-backed students body Bangladesh Chhatra League and Jamaat-e-Islami-backed Islami Chhatra Shibir clashed on the campus on Sunday afternoon. The BCL activists allegedly torched at least 42 rooms of the college hostel forcing the Shibir men out, eye-witnesses said.

The college was declared shut for an indefinite period on Monday.

A human chain was staged by aggrieved citizens in front of the college hostel yesterday afternoon to protest Sunday's incident.

INVESTIGATIONS UNDERWAY
The five-member probe committee, formed by the district administration,

talked to about 20 persons since Tuesday afternoon.

The probe committee members yesterday talked to injured student Ujjal Ahmed at Osmani Medical College Hospital, said Additional District Magistrate of Sylhet Md Shahidul Alam, chief of the committee.

Meanwhile, the other probe body, formed by the college authorities, started their work yesterday, said Vice-Principal Md Al-Helal Bhuiyan, head of the committee. They visited the hostel and talked to the staff there.

Police so far arrested 21 Shibir activists including college unit Secretary Mamun Hossain in the two cases -- filed by a BCL activist and the police.

However, no case was filed as yet against the BCL men although different quarters including a number of ruling party men allege their involvement with the anarchy.

Indian army

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ordered after the Intelligence Bureau personnel had noticed that the officer was regularly in touch with her on Facebook.

Army sources said the officer had not established any physical contact with the woman and it was limited only in the cyber domain.

The same woman by the name of Sheeba was allegedly involved in honey-trapping another Lt Col during his posting in Bangladesh and then blackmailed the officer through ISI, which asked him to spy for Pakistan.

The infantry officer was doing his Staff College course in Bangladesh's Military Academy in Dhaka. He met the woman at a party in Dhaka and was allegedly approached by ISI agents later.

No farmland

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He warned that if any negligence was found in handling of government land, punitive action would be taken against the government officials concerned.

As the DCs complained that it was very difficult to maintain the land records, the minister said the government would start computerisation of the land survey records from this month.

Emerging from the meeting Hira told newsmen that the digitisation of land survey records was a continuous process and the work would go on.

The land zoning has already been completed in 21 districts, he said, and the government would start a plot-to-plot land survey this month.

Regarding vested property, the minister said the government has prepared two lists -- vested properties under government custody, and those occupied by others.

Limon

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The New York-based rights body made the call after police on July 1 secretly charged the Jhalakathi college student in a second case for "obstructing law enforcers from discharging their duties".

The 17-year-old was also charged in an arms case in April last year.

In a statement titled "Bangladesh: Drop Charges against Child Victim of Paramilitary Force", the HRW said the charges were filed although the government had previously stated that it had found no evidence of Limon's involvement in terrorist attacks claimed by Rab.

"It is perverse and just plain mean to charge a boy who had his leg amputated with a crime just to cover up the wrongdoing of the Rapid Action Battalion," said Brad Adams, Asia director at HRW.

On March 23 last year, Rab shot him in the leg taking him for a criminal just a fortnight before his exams. Doctors had to amputate the leg from the thigh to save his life.

The technical team of Centre for Disability in Development in Savar grafted an artificial leg on him on August 29 last year.

Activation

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made to ensure security. The process would help law enforcers curb criminal activity through mobile phones as no SIM would be active or sold without proper SIM registration or information required, said experts.

In a meeting at Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) yesterday, law enforcement officials asked telecom operators to implement the decision within the next three months, said BTRC officials.

However, mobile-operator officials said it was a challenge as there was no national database in the country to verify a person's identity. The National Identity card server of the Election Commission was not ready for use, claimed the officials.

A telecom official present at the meeting said the operators asked for nine months to implement the decision but law enforcement agency officials demanded it be done by three.

Mahmud Hossain, chief corporate officer of Grameenphone, said SIM sales would dip but registration would be confirmed. He said the operators have taken this issue positively.

Buet plunges

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agitation. With yesterday's developments the leading engineering university of the country plunged into a major crisis threatening the academic activities of students.

In the letter, the teachers who resigned said they had no confidence in the activities of the VC and pro-VC who had committed "irregularities" in promoting a teacher to the registrar's position and creating the post of pro-vice-chancellor.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Nazrul Islam, however, termed the mass resignations "improper" and "unacceptable".

"The way the teachers resigned was improper as they gave signatures on a piece of paper and sent it to my office. It was a symbolic resignation and it was done to get media attention," he told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, an emergency syndicate meeting of the university yesterday decided to ask the chancellor of the university, President Zillur Rahman, to form a judicial enquiry commission to probe the teachers' allegations against the VC and pro-VC.

After the meeting, VC Nazrul Islam told the media that the syndicate had also decided to consult with the agitating teachers on finding an amicable solution to the crisis. It also approved the 44-day vacation the university went into yesterday, added the VC.

Some of the teachers who resigned told The Daily Star yesterday that they had done so for the sake of the students and the institution's future. "There is no atmosphere to work under the incumbent administration.

The vice-chancellor has been involved in controversial activities one after another since he assumed office," said Prof Shakil Akhtar, chairman of the department of Urban Rural Planning.

According to the teachers, the university authorities' appointment of Habibur Rahman, a professor of the civil engineering department, to the post of pro-VC was based solely on his political affiliation.

The university authorities violated the Buet custom of maintaining seniority regarding promotions and appointments, claimed the teachers' association, adding that the VC had begun a massive restructuring of the university administration since he took over on August 31, 2010.

They claimed that Deputy Registrar Kamal Ahmed had been appointed to the post of interim registrar through violating university convention. They also charged that the administration had

changed the scores of two students.

The teachers' association has been agitating for several months demanding the removal of the VC and pro-VC. They observed a 28-day work abstention from April 7 but suspended their programme on the assurance of the prime minister and education minister that their demands would be looked into.

On May 9, the Buet authorities formed a probe committee to look into the allegations made by the teachers' association. The committee submitted its report on June 12 but the association rejected the probe report.

Buet, considered by many as the best educational institution in the country in terms of quality, went on a long summer, Ramadan, Shab-e-Qadr and Eid-ul-Fitr vacation yesterday. It will remain closed for 44 days at a stretch.

The announcement of the closure of the university came at a time when the teachers' association had given an ultimatum for the VC and pro-VC to resign by Saturday.

Yesterday, the teachers' association announced the indefinite sit-in following the announcement of the closure. The teachers' association members, Buet officials and employees brought out a silent procession on the campus around noon.

Around 1,000 students of the institution holding banners expressed their solidarity with the agitating teachers. Parading the campus streets, they gathered in front of the administrative building and held a rally there.

Prof Mujibur Rahman, president of the teachers' association, said the authorities had closed the institution unethically and without consulting with any forum. "But we will continue our movement until the VC and pro-VC resign," he said.

He said although teachers had gone back to taking classes on the assurance of the prime minister, the problems were yet to be taken care of.

Terming the demands of the teachers' association absurd, the VC said all the allegations they had raised against him were false and baseless. "It's the sole aim of the agitators to take control of the chairs of Buet VC and pro-VC," he told The Daily Star.

Earlier in the day, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid expressed concern over the latest developments and said the situation was hampering students' studies and academic environment.

"I have asked that a

syndicate meeting be called immediately to review the entire situation and find a peaceful solution," he told The Daily Star.

He asked the senior teachers to sit and talk to find a solution. "...Buet is one of the best institutions of the country and we should not make any decision that ruins the students' future," Nahid said.

About the VC and pro-VC, Nahid said a probe was going on and they would definitely take action against them if they were found guilty.

With the resignations, the ongoing crisis at Buet has taken a turn for the worse and students, arguably the cream of the country, fear that they have been the brunt of the conflict.

Monitoring teams, the traders will not be able to attack the magistrates."

"We are conducting drives to control the prices of basic commodities. We will reinforce the drives in the upcoming Ramadan.

"Apply the laws against the profiteers. You [DCs] have been empowered greatly under the consumer rights protection laws. The law has provisions for even the death penalty," Quader said while addressing the DCs at the three-day DCs' conference that began on Tuesday in the capital.

At the grassroots level, a section of traders manipulate the essential market through monopoly, he said, adding that the ministry had already formed eight district-level committees under the law to bring the wrongdoers to book.

Similar committees in other districts would be formed soon, he said, and urged the deputy commissioners to promote the products of their districts.

"We are trying to expand the list of export items through the ministry's one-district one-product project. Eighty percent of our exports are ready-made garments and our markets are also limited only in the EU, the US, Canada and Japan," Quader said.

He said exports indeed fell slightly in the last fiscal year. But he said he disagreed with those critics who said it had been a bad year for exports.

Over the last few years, the government has been trying to increase exports to countries like India, Russia and South Africa.

At the request of the Bogra DC at the meeting, the minister instantly instructed the chairman of the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh to set up a depot there for smooth distribution of goods.

No wrongdoing

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national council of Awami Swachhasebak League at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital.

"How could corruption take place when the World Bank did not disburse any money? For whose interest have they cheated the people of Bangladesh by cancelling the loan agreement all of a sudden?" asked Hasina, president of the ruling Awami League.

She mentioned the government had so far spent Tk 1,500 crore on land acquisition and rehabilitation. And no corruption allegations had been raised, not even by the WB, over it, said Hasina.

"We have more than \$10 billion in foreign-exchange reserves and it is not a big deal to spend \$1 billion from it. Inshallah, we will be able to start the bridge's construction in time.

"We have to be bold to take the project forward. I know they [the WB] are very powerful but we want to say that Bangladesh won't bow to anyone."

"The people of this country fought a war against powerful Pakistan occupation forces at the call of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and defeated them. We are a triumphant nation. We will be able to build the bridge on

ourown."

"People have again risen against injustice." She said the government would not beg to anyone for the project and reiterated that the project would be completed during the present government's tenure.

The prime minister said if donors come up with offers to fund the project, the government would decide on it after scrutiny.

She alleged that the previous BNP-led alliance government had halted the initiative taken during the last Awami League government's tenure to build the bridge.

"We resumed the process after coming to power. They [the WB] wanted to give us loan and we signed a contract. But they cancelled it suddenly on a pretext."

Hasina said the global lender cancelled its loans in power and communications sectors during the previous BNP-Jamaat government's tenure over corruption allegations, but that could not hinder development works in the communications sector.

Casting aside doubts that the government would not be able to build the bridge with its own funds, Hasina said she had received overwhelming response from common people and they had proved that the government was on the right path.

She alleged that the leader

of the opposition and her family members had been indulged in corruption and siphoned off money abroad.

Hasina said the trials of war criminals, 10-truck arms haul case and August 21 grenade attack case were underway, and the perpetrators would be brought to justice.

Referring to the BDR mutiny, she questioned why the opposition leader had "gone underground just two to three hours before the mutiny."

She said the trial of the BDR mutiny case was being held in a disciplined way and urged all to be alert about those trying to obstruct the trial to save the killers.

She directed Awami Swachhasebak League leaders and activists to showcase the government's development activities and work to help build Bangabandhu's "Sonar Bangla".

AL Organising Secretary AFM Bahauddin Nasim, also founder president of Swachhasebak League, said the BNP-Jamaat alliance wants to create chaos in the country in the name of anti-government movement only to protect Khaleda Zia's two corrupt sons and the war criminals.

Later, Molla Md Abu Kawsar was elected as Swachhasebak League president and Pankaj

Businesses hit hard

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highways has reached to an intolerable level.

"We want the government take steps to prevent extortion in highway transportation. We will meet the home minister soon to express our concern in this regard," he said.

If the government does not properly address the issue, the prices of basic commodities might go up due to supply disruption or paying extra to the hoarders, he observed.

Asif Ibrahim, president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said the businesses will be affected as transportation of goods by lorries or covered-vans will remain halted during the two-day strike.

"The government should look into the matter seriously so that the transportation of goods between Dhaka and Chittagong is not affected," he said.

Talking to The Daily Star, Rustom Ali, convener of truck-covered van owners' association, said trucks and covered-vans did not operate on roads and highways from 6:00am yesterday.

In a written statement, he urged his co-workers to observe the strike peacefully.

However, trucks and covered-vans that will carry relief materials for flood-affected people will remain out of the purview of the strike, he said.

About hampering business activities across the country, Rustom said, "The government is responsible

for the situation. It has compelled us to call the strike."

"The government did not pay heed to our demands despite our repeated requests," he added.

The 14-point demand of the association includes stopping extortion in ferry ghats, easing the process of issuing driving licence, allowing trucks and covered vans to ply city streets during daytime.

Meanwhile, owners of rod-carrying trucks in Chittagong yesterday withdrew their strike after leaders of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry assured them of addressing their demands, reports our Chittagong correspondent.

The owners of rod-carrying trucks went on an indefinite strike from Sunday demanding an end to frequent robbery of goods carrying vehicles on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway.

AUTO-RICKSHAW STRIKE
A section of CNG-run auto-rickshaw drivers went on an indefinite strike in the capital from yesterday to press home their 10-point demand, especially to bring an end to overcharging daily deposits by auto-rickshaw owners.

"We will continue the strike until our demands are met," Mohammad Hanif, general secretary of Dhaka Auto-Rickshaw Sramik Union, told The Daily Star last night.

As per the government rate, auto-rickshaw owners are allowed to charge Tk 600

daily as deposit money. "But they charge between Tk 750 and Tk 1,300," alleged Hanif.

Dhaka Auto-Rickshaw Sramik Union and Dhaka Zila Auto-Rickshaw Sramik Union declared the strike yesterday from a rally in front of Jatiya Press Club. Dhaka Zila Four Stroke Auto-Rickshaw Drivers' Union also expressed solidarity with the programme.

On June 24, the associations submitted memoranda to different ministries concerned and to Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) over the demands and gave an ultimatum until July 10 to fulfil those.

Hanif said there were around 25,000 workers registered with the two associations.

The organisations were to stage a protest rally in front of press club this morning.

The demands include cancellation of route permit system, setting up of parking spaces for auto-rickshaws, easing the licence issuing process and compensating auto-rickshaw drivers in case injuries in accidents.

Earlier, Dhaka Mohanagar CNG-Auto Rickshaw Owners' Association called a 48-hour strike for Wednesday and Thursday to press their 10-point demand, mainly for withdrawal of the newly-imposed annual income tax.

They, however, withdrew the strike Tuesday after a meeting with the BRTA.