

# Nuclear power plant gearing up for launch

Hasina is scheduled to inaugurate first phase of work on Oct 2

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPI, *Pabna*

Safety is of the utmost priority at the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, currently prepping in full steam for the October 2 inauguration of the project's first phase of work by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

"The plant is one of the priority projects for the government to meet increasing demand for power," Yeafesh Osman, state minister for science and technology, told the Daily Star yesterday.

Osman along with the Russian experts and high officials of Atomic Energy Commission visited the project site on Friday and Saturday ahead of the inauguration of the project.

The minister shared the project details with the local people at a meeting at the Pabna Circuit House auditorium on Saturday.

"The government is working toward implementing the project with the highest importance for public safety," Osman said.

The Padma river is a major concern for the project for cooling and transportation of the project machinery as well as keeping the reactor cool in operational phases.

The government will take up a study to make a prediction of the next 100 years of the river for the sake of the cooling of the reactor, Osman said. Necessary dredging will be done to ensure navigability to smoothen transportation through the river.

Russian consultancy firm Atomstroyexport will supervise and monitor the construction of first phase work of the plant at a cost of \$45.9 million, an official with the Atomic Energy Commission said. The company will run a series of 63 tests.

# Bangladesh e-commerce fair starts in London

ANSAR AHMED ULLAH

The first UK-Bangladesh e-commerce fair is taking place in London this weekend with many major e-commerce-related organisations from both the UK and Bangladesh showcasing their products and services.

The fair will give participants an opportunity to familiarise and integrate with the fastest growing business form in the world, organisers say.

Services such as money transfer, donations and buying greetings cards are now just a click away from the comfort of people's homes due to the opportunity of e-commerce.

The fair is scheduled to take place at Gloucester Millennium Hotel, South West London, from September 7-9.

A number of seminars have been organised covering themes of empowering women, export business utilising e-commerce, e-commerce in Bangladesh: current trend and way forward and emerging banking services.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni was to attend the opening ceremony.

The fair has been jointly organised by Bangladesh's ICT ministry, Bangladesh High Commission in London and Computer Jagat.

# Sheltech extends fair

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Sheltech has extended the duration of Sheltech Autumn Fair 2013 to September 21 at its own corporate office at Panthapath in the city, the company said in a statement yesterday.

The clients will get an opportunity to buy 450 apartments of different sizes situated in Gulshan, Banani, Baridhara, Bashabo, Bashundhara, Central Road, Moghbazar, Motijheel, Shyamoli, Kathalbagan, Paribag, Uttara, Mirpur, Mohammadpur, and Gandaria in Dhaka with attractive prices, according to the statement.

The customers will get 32-inch Sony LCD television on booking a flat. They will also get a Toyota car through lottery for buying undisputed lands in Ashulia and Sheltech Bithika apartment booking. Besides, they will get discount offers for ready and furnished flats.

The Sheltech Autumn Fair will remain open from 9:00am to 7:00pm. The fair started on July 23.

# Emirates appoints new area manager to Bangladesh

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Emirates appointed Khalid Ali J Hassan as its area manager for Bangladesh, the airline said in a statement yesterday.

Hassan most recently held the role of manager for the airline's station in Zambia, and brings 17 years of industry experience to the post.

"We need a person of Khalid's calibre to manage this important destination on the Emirates network," said Ahmed Khoory, senior vice-president commercial operations West Asia and Indian Ocean. "He is an asset to our organisation and has a wealth of experience. I am confident he will play a key role in the ongoing development of our operations in Bangladesh."

"Bangladesh is a high growth market with a lot of potential. Emirates enjoys a well-established reputation among travellers from Bangladesh, owing to its renowned customer service, both in the air and on the ground," Khalid said.

Khalid started his career as a management trainee with Emirates in 1996. During his service with Emirates, he has held various key positions at home and abroad. He was born in Dubai and majored in English language and literature at UAE University.

Emirates operates 21 flights a week from Dhaka and via Dubai offers convenient connections to more than 130 destinations in 76 countries worldwide.



Md Rezaul Haque, chairman of Social Islami Bank, distributes gift hampers among Hajj pilgrims at a booth of the bank at Ashkona Hajj Camp in the capital recently. AMM Farhad, deputy managing director, was also present.



Team Ocean's 4 from IBA, winners of Battle of Minds 2013, pose with other winners and participants at the concluding ceremony of the competition in Dhaka on Wednesday.

# Apple poised to ship iPhones to China Mobile

AFP, *New York City*

China's biggest mobile carrier looks set to sell Apple's iPhone, hugely increasing the California-based company's distribution in the world's largest smartphone market, the Wall Street Journal reported on Friday.

Apple is preparing to ship iPhones to China Mobile, in a successful conclusion to years of negotiations with the Chinese wireless giant which has some 700 million subscribers, the Journal reported on its website.

The report comes as Apple prepares an event at its headquarters next week where it is expected to unveil two new iPhones, including a cheaper version.

# NBR to see a sharp cut in its tax claim

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However, the government had earlier committed to the operators that it would end all tax-related disputes before the 3G auction scheduled for today.

Sunil Kanti Bose, chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, said the committees reexamined the SIMs according to a formula prescribed by the NBR, and the interim reports were accepted by all the stakeholders.

"The procedure was very much acceptable," he said.

However, an NBR official recently wrote in a letter to the convener of the review committee that the government should not take any concrete decision based on the interim reports.

When asked about the matter, the BTRC chairman said, "The NBR officials have signed the reports along with the operators and BTRC representatives."

"After the 3G auction, we will sit with the government to finalise the matter," Bose added.

TIM Nurul Kabir, secretary general of AMTOB and a member of the review committee, said the reviews should be completed as soon as possible.

Zakiul Islam, senior director of Banglalink, said: "All the samples of my company were duly verified and the verification was done based on the terms of reference."

Mahmud Hossain, chief corporate affairs officer of Grameenphone, said, "We could not send some of the information from the CDR (call details records) due to large volume of call data. But we believe the number of taxable SIMs will decrease substantially when we will be able to provide all the information."

Mahmudur Rahman, executive vice president of Robi, said, they are now waiting for a government decision on the basis of the interim reports.

# UN urges united stand from Asia-Pacific

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"Even more difficult, they have to take decisive action now about events that may or may not take place," he said while presenting the study at the auditorium of BRAC Centre Inn in Dhaka.

The Centre for Policy Dialogue, a think tank, organised a discussion to mark the launch of the report.

The report ranked Bangladesh as one of the countries that are most at risk for natural disasters and economic crises.

It called for government support to build resilient communities so they can withstand any natural or economic disasters.

The ESCAP report also called upon regional countries to establish coordinated economic management and investment in social protection and inclusive development and cooperation on food security and sustainable resource management.

CPD Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan said there is a whole segment of population who live perpetually a vulnerable life and face disasters in a variety of episodic ways.

"So, it remains to be seen how we, as a society, are willing to do to address the inequity of vulnerability and the inequity of opportunities," he said at the discussion.

The former caretaker government adviser also called for social arrangements and institutions for coping with the problems of various disasters.

"In any disasters, collective responses are very critical. You will only generate collective responses if you design and build collective institutions."

Sobhan also raised questions whether the issue has been internalised into the political discourse and serious debates directed at climate change take place in parliament.

He said it also remains to be seen how many people who are aspiring for power by contesting elections are capable of taking

the issue of climate change forward, and urged to incorporate the issue in the political discourse.

CPD's Distinguished Fellow Debapriya Bhattacharya said the government should improve its capacity so funds really reach the targeted beneficiaries.

He said political crisis has added to the existing natural and economics shocks. As a result, Bangladesh could face problem in the medium-term, which might take five to seven years for the country to return to its earlier position.

Saleemul Huq, senior fellow of London-based International Institute for Environment and Development, called for diverting funds directly to the local governments to mitigate the climate change impacts.

M Asaduzzaman, a former research director of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, said many still believe normal adaptation will be enough to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

"But it will not be. Adaptation to climate change will have to be a completely new set of frameworks for development actions and policy. This is yet to happen."

He said the macroeconomic impacts of major disasters could be devastating without any doubt. "But if resilience is properly built, the adverse impacts can be minimised."

Asaduzzaman also said a substantial amount of money might flow to Bangladesh by 2020 if the country plays its role properly.

"It is likely that such flows, which may be a billion dollar or more a year, will certainly have major macroeconomic implications. Money supply may increase, public expenditures may rise and local economies may have a boost. Are we ready for that?"

The countries will need to put in place institutional, financial and legal infrastructure of international standards which will

be monitored and verified by international bodies, he said.

Osman Faruque, a former education minister, said estimating the cost of wars, aggression, poor governance and corruption is important for any economy apart from natural disasters.

Saber Hossain Chowdhury, chair of the All Party Group on Climate Change and Environment in parliament, said long-term investment is crucial to tackling climate change.

"One dollar of investment today will save five dollars tomorrow. But if we invest now, it will take 15-20 years to get the results."

The ruling party lawmaker also said Bangladesh has been "tremendously successful" in saving people from disasters. "But what is about the quality of life of those people?"

Ina F Islam, assistant director of International Centre for Climate Change and Development, said Bangladesh is much ahead in the fight against climate change.

"We have potential and platform. We just need to do our work in a more concerted way."

Kazi Mesbah Uddin Ahmed, a former managing director of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation, said there is serious deficit in governance in addressing climate change, irrespective of parties in power.

He said Cyclone Aila took place in 2009, but nothing has been done to rehabilitate the affected people.

Ahmed also called for regional cooperation in tackling climate change and urged ESCAP to take the role of a mediator.

M Syeduzzaman, a former finance minister, Inam Ahmed Chowdhury, adviser to the BNP chairperson, Prof Mustafizur Rahman, executive director of CPD, and Masyuki Taga, councillor for economic affairs and development at the Japanese embassy in Dhaka, also spoke.

# US job growth disappoints, offers cautionary note for Fed

REUTERS, *Washington*

US employers hired fewer workers than expected in August and the jobless rate hit a 4-1/2-year low as Americans gave up the search for work, complicating the Federal Reserve's decision on whether to scale back its massive monetary stimulus this month.

Nonfarm payrolls increased by 169,000 jobs last month, the Labor Department said on Friday, falling short of the 180,000 Wall Street had expected and adding to signs that economic growth may have slowed a bit in the third quarter.

While economists believe the Fed could still announce a tapering of its monthly bond purchases at its Sept 17-18 policy meeting, they said the weak data increased chances of a delay.

"A compromise between hawks and doves might be that the tapering will be announced in September but that the purchase amount will be reduced by an even smaller amount than we currently anticipate," said Harm Bandholz, chief US economist at Unicredit Research in New York.

The US central bank has been buying \$85 billion in bonds per month to hold interest rates down.

A Reuters poll of big bond dealers conducted after the jobs data was released found that 13 of the 18 institutions expect the Fed to dial back its purchases this month. Of those 13, the median forecast was for a cut of \$15 billion.



Children ride on a merry-go-round at the Jamuna Future Park's entertainment section that took off on Friday.

# Common checklist on factory inspection

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The preliminary appraisal of the garment factory buildings will start on September 15 under a checklist prepared by BUET, the secretary said, after a technical workshop on the standards for assessment.

Representatives from international retailers, NAA, IndustriALL, government higher-ups, labour leaders and garment manufacturers were present at the workshop held at the capital's Hotel Sonargaon.

Of the 4,000-odd garment factories in the country, Shipar said the NAA and IndustriALL will inspect 1,750 of them and BUET teams the rest. Both the platforms are yet to submit their lists of factories though, he said.

"In factory inspection, the laws of the land will be considered. In case of any tough law we will amend it."

All three types of buildings—purpose made, shared and transformed ones—will be equally inspected under the regulations, Shipar said.

At the briefing, Srinivas B Reddy, country director of International Labour Organisation, said assessments will be completed in two phases, preliminary and detailed engineering assessments.

"The preliminary assessments will be completed within six months, while the detailed ones will be done within three years," he added.

US Ambassador Dan Mozena said Bangladesh should prepare a world-

class inspection system, as stipulated in the Obama administration's roadmap for Bangladesh to have its Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) status reinstated, so that incidents like the Rana Plaza building collapse and Tazreen fire do not take place. "The retailers, brands and Bangladesh government should create a credible factory inspection regime," he added.

At the inaugural session of the discussion, Phillip Jacques, chargé d'affaires of the Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh, said being a least-developed country Bangladesh should not take its GSP status for granted. "It may not continue if the working environment and safety standards are not improved."

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