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Sushil Koirala is tasked with completing the Himalayan nation's stalled peace process

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INT'L TRADE FAIR ENDS

Big buy and sale, but goal missing

MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

The Dhaka International Trade Fair has become an exposition for importers, not local manufacturers.

The country's biggest trade show that came to a close yesterday was meant to be an annual venue for local manufacturers to display a diverse array of products and help them network with buyers from overseas.

But it now seems to be a lost opportunity.

This year round, the DITF was infested with traders selling imported items and local substandard products.

Only 20 percent of the 471 stalls and pavilions at the fair showcased locally-made products with quality that can beat foreign brands. The rest were filled by importers, traders and distributors.

Participation of major local brands was limited to sectors such as furniture, kitchenware, foods and textiles.

A number of local garment traders and tailoring houses based in New Market, Chandni Chowk and Islampur rented stalls at the show. Nearly two dozen tailors from the capital's Elephant Road set up stalls to sell low-quality blazers, each selling for as low as Tk 1,300.

Vendors and hawkers occupied footpaths with makeshift shops that call to mind the scenes of roadside shopping seen across the city.

In association with the commerce ministry, the Export Promotion Bureau has been organising the month-long exhibition at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar since 1995.

Export orders at the show fell by a half to Tk 80.44 crore this year, compared to the previous edition, as political unrest kept foreign buyers at bay.

Its stated objective is to project quality exportable products of the country to the visitors from home and abroad.

Organisers say the fair aims to give scope to local producers in the remote areas, who do not have financial strength to participate in fairs abroad to

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Shoppers gather at a pavilion of plastic crockery at Dhaka International Trade Fair yesterday, the concluding day of the annual show meant for local manufacturers to display their products and build network with foreign buyers.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

HC RULE ON GOVT

Why not stop Maheshkhali power plant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

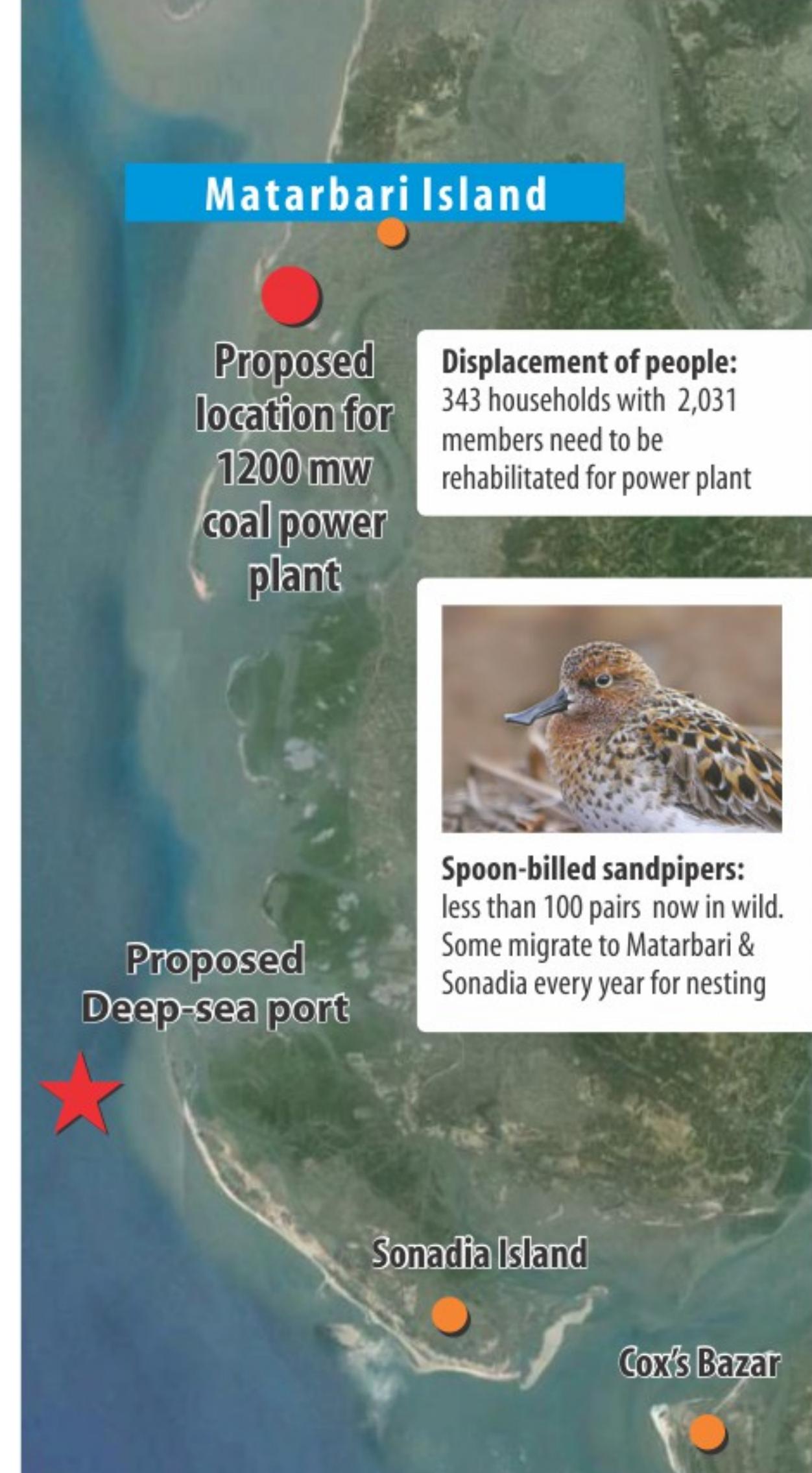
The High Court yesterday ordered the government to explain why it should not be directed not to set up the proposed Matarbari coal-based thermal power plant at Maheshkhali in Cox's Bazar.

In a rule, the court asked the government to come up with an explanation within two weeks.

The power secretary, director general of the Department of Environment, chairman of the Power Development Board and managing director of the Matarbari power project have been made respondents to the rule.

The HC bench of Justice Mirza Hussain Haider and Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar issued the rule after hearing a writ petition filed by one Altaf Hossain from Maheshkhali, challenging the legality of setting up the power plant.

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Maheshkhali to house massive power plant

Coal-fired unit to produce 1,200MW electricity

SHARIER KHAN

The government has planned to set up a massive 1,200 megawatt coal-fired power plant at a staggering cost of about \$4 billion in Matarbari island of Maheshkhali, touted as the country's future energy hub.

According to a feasibility study conducted by Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) with Tokyo Electric Power, power from this plant would cost nearly Tk 7 per kilowatt hour when it begins commercial production in 2023 using imported coal. Though the price is high in the present context, it is acceptable in the context of future scenario.

But the project cost is significantly higher than the Indo-Bangla joint venture 1,320 megawatt Rampal coal-fired power plant, which would need at least \$1.5 billion. However, the total cost of Rampal plant, where a consultant is now being appointed, excludes the cost for project site purchase, river dredging and construction of transmission line.

The Matarbari plant's power generation component alone would require \$3 billion, making it one of the costliest power projects in the country.

Besides, \$1 billion will be spent to set up a port for large ships with a capacity of 80,000 tonnes, a high voltage 400 kV power

transmission line from Maheshkhali to Anwara, construction of road and two bridges from Chakaria up to the project site.

This would be the first venture of the newly formed Coal Power Generation Company Bangladesh Ltd. The project is part of the government's plan to eventually produce 10,000 MW power in Maheshkhali, in addition to setting up a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal there to import LNG equivalent to 500 million cubic feet per day (mmcf/d) in near future to address the country's ever-increasing gas crisis.

Maheshkhali is located close to Sonadia island, the proposed site for the country's first deep sea port.

As per the project's implementation schedule, the government needs to sign a loan agreement by late March and then appoint a consultant. But due to the volatile political situation since late last year, progress to this end has been stalled. Officials at this point are not sure about when the loan agreement could be signed and with whom.

The schedule also says that the basic design, bid documents preparation and floating of the tender for prequalifying power companies for this project would be done within next year and the contract would be awarded in 2016 so that a

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MANZOOR MURDER



Verdict kept in wait

New judge wants to hear closing arguments

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Former dictator HM Ershad, principal accused in the Manzoor murder case, and two other accused ex-military officials were present in a Dhaka court yesterday to hear it pronounce the long-pending verdict.

But the court decided to hear the arguments afresh on February 27 terming the case "old" and "sensational", thanks to the transfer of the judge just a week ago.

The case has seen 22 judges since it was filed on August 28, 1995, and the judges were either promoted or transferred to other districts.

"I have joined the court recently. I am not aware of the case," said Khondker Hasan Md Firoz, the newly appointed judge of the First Additional District Sessions and Judges' Court of Dhaka.

Moreover, statements of 28 prosecution witnesses were not properly written, he added.

"So I shall have to scrutinise all the documents of the case and hear both the prosecution and the defence."



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US embassy was 'in touch'

Says full verdict in a 10-truck arms haul case

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Ctg



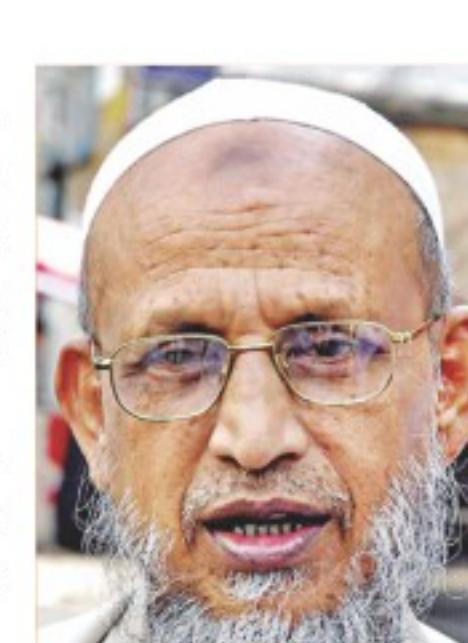
The officials of two intelligence agencies who have been convicted in the 10-truck arms haul cases maintained close contacts with the US and Pakistan missions, Dubai-based Pakistani company ARY Group and leaders of the Indian separatist group Ulfa.

A Chittagong court made the observation in the full verdict in one of the two cases filed over the biggest arms haul in the country. The court cited confessional statements of the convicts in making the observation.

On January 30, Chittagong Metropolitan Special Tribunal-1 judge SM Mojibur Rahman handed down death penalty to 14, including the then ministers Motiur Rahman Nizami and Lutfuzzaman Babar and five officials of DGFI and NSI, the

CTG MADRASA BLAST Mufti Izhar, son charge-sheeted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg



Chittagong police yesterday pressed charges against Hefajat-e Islam nayeb-e-ameer Mufti Izharul Islam Chowdhury, his son and seven others in a case filed in connection with an explosion at a madrasa.

The blast occurred in a room of a dormitory of Al Jamiatul Ulum Al Islamia Madrasa in port city's Lalkhan Bazar on October 7, 2013. Three people died in the explosion.

Md Lokman, a sub-inspector of Khulshi Police Station, submitted the charge sheet before the court of Chittagong Metropolitan Magistrate Mashirul Rahman Chowdhury around 1:30pm.

The other accused in the case are Abdul Hai, Rabibur Rahman, Md Ishak, Monir Hossain, Abdul Mannan, Tafsiur Ahmed and Mohammad Junayed.

Mufti Izharul and his son Harun Bin Izhar were made the prime accused in the case, said Rezaul Masud, additional deputy commissioner (prosecution) of Chittagong police.

Izharul, also principal of the madrasa, went into hiding after the blast, he added.

According to the charge sheet, explosives were made and kept at the madrasa for conducting subversive activities and creating panic among

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Advertiser

Government owned Essential Drugs Company Limited (EDCL) has signed Toll Manufacturing Agreement with Sharif Pharmaceuticals Limited on February 9, 2014 in the Head Office of EDCL, Dhaka. Dr. M Kadru Huda, PhD, Managing Director & CEO of EDCL and Md. Rajib Sharif, Managing Director of Sharif Pharmaceuticals Limited signed the agreement in presence of high officials of both the companies.