

Rooppur gets site clearance today

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, *Pabna*

The Bangladesh Atomic Energy Regulatory Authority (Baera) is set to issue a site licence today to the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (Baec) to run the Rooppur nuclear power plant.

The Baera will hand over the licence to the Baec at a ceremony to be held at Hotel Sonargaon today, officials say.

"Licensing is very important for the nuclear plant. The site licence is the first step for building a nuclear plant," said Dr Shawkat Akbar, project director of RNPP, adding, "This will be followed by a construction licence."

The Baec submitted site documents related to engineering survey and environmental assessment survey to the Baera in September last year to obtain the licence.

Science and Technology Minister Yeafesh Osman told The Daily Star that the licence was being issued following clearance by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which has been monitoring the project.

"The IAEA is involved in all aspects of implementation of this nuclear power project. Besides, the Russian atomic energy regulatory authority is also involved," Osman added.

The IAEA has a milestone document that needs development of 19 items. To launch the Rooppur project, Bangladesh must comply with these 19 items following an assessment by the IAEA.

Bangladesh and Russia have meanwhile been expected to sign the final agreement for \$12.65 billion Russian loan for this project in July this year. The two countries had earlier 'initialled' the loan agreement in December last year.

Minister Yeafesh Osman said, "Negotiations with Russia for the loan have been complete. There are no issues pending. It is expected that we will sign the deal in July this year."

This would be the biggest single investment in the country. Under this loan, Bangladesh will install two units of 1,200 megawatt power plant each.

Although the price tag of \$12.65 billion seems very high, the cost of power would be cheaper than most recent power plants in the country. It is because the Rooppur plant would generate 2,400 MW power with a plant life that is almost three times of a conventional plant.

The Rooppur project was inaugurated on October 2, 2013. Under a half

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



The first phase of work of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant in Pabna's Ishwardi upazila is going on in full swing. Around 80 percent of preparatory work, including development of the project site, is already complete and is likely to end by December this year. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

RECEPTION IN KOLKATA Hasina 'accepts invitation'

Dhaka keeps trust in Delhi over Teesta deal, envoy tells Mamata

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kolkata*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has accepted the West Bengal state government's invitation for holding a reception in Kolkata in her honour.

Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Syed Muazzem Ali conveyed the PM's decision to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee during a courtesy call on her yesterday, Zokey Ahad, Bangladesh deputy high commissioner in Kolkata, told The Daily Star.

In the 40-minute meeting, the Bangladesh envoy expressed his government's full confidence in New Delhi over ratification of the Teesta water-sharing agreement.

Various issues including development of ports, hilsa trade and militant threat to Ramkrishna Mission in Dhaka came up for discussion, Ahad said.

The schedule of the PM's trip to Kolkata will be finalised through talks between Bangladesh and West

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

BSF shoots dead two Bangladeshis

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Chapainawabganj*

Indian Border security Force-BSF killed two Bangladeshi nationals on Charaldanga frontier of Gomostapur upazila in Chapainawabganj early Monday, some 200 yards inside the Indian Territory from the border.

The deceased were identified as, Shahjahan Ali Bhutto, 35, son of Hekmat Ali of Begpur village and Zobdul Haque alias Bhadu, 35, son of late Daud Ali of Charaldanga village under Gomostapur upazila in the district.

Lt Col Zahid Hasan, Commanding Officer of 43 Battalion of the Border Guard Bangladesh in Naogaon said, the BSF personnel of Anuradhapur camp under 82 BSF Battalion of Malda in West Bengal opened fire on five to seven smugglers at around 2:00 am killing Shahjahan and Zobdul on the spot. They were going to India by crossing the Punorbhaba river to collect illegal goods. Others managed to escape from the spot.

He said, a joint investigation was held at around 4:00 pm by BGB and BSF personnel at the border area where

the incident happened. BSF members of Anuradhapur camp confirmed to BGB that they shot the two men about 200 yards inside Indian territory at around 2:00 am.

BSF claimed that around five to seven smugglers were cutting fences to enter Indian territory for collection of goods to smuggle back across the border. When BSF members chased them men from among the smugglers attacked one BSF personnel with sharp weapons (Hasua) and injured him. The BSF jawans of Anuradhapur camp then opened fire on the smugglers, he said.

BSF men recovered one pair of pliers and sharp weapons the smugglers left behind and showed these to the CO of BGB during the joint investigation. They also brought the wounded BSF personnel to show them to BSE, said the CO.

Indian police recovered their dead bodies from the spot and sent them to Malda Hospital morgue for autopsy.

BSF agreed to return the dead bodies of Shahjahan and Zobdul to Bangladesh today (Tuesday) morning at around 10:00 am to 11:00 am, the CO added.

EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS Trial, if any complaints made: CJ

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha yesterday said trials of extrajudicial killings must be held if any complaint is lodged with a court in this regard.

"I have no official knowledge of any extrajudicial killings. We don't hold trials on the basis of newspaper and media reports. If we receive any complaint about such killings, we will take necessary measures. No offenders would be let off the hook," he added.

The CJ was responding to a question from a journalist at the conference room of Dhaka Bar Association after paying surprise visits to some lower courts to see their proceedings.

Sinha, the 21st chief justice of the country, is only the second CJ to have made such visits. Earlier in October 2010, then chief justice ABM Khairul Haque had visited different lower courts in Dhaka in guise of a general visitor.

Sources said the CJ reached the court area around 9:10am and visited the courtrooms of the Dhaka district and sessions judge, metropolitan sessions judge, chief metropolitan magistrate and chief judicial magistrate.

He was shocked to see that four women prisoners, accused in drug cases, along with their children were kept in the court jail of the chief metropolitan magistrate's court.

"I am very much shocked to see that the judge of Nari o Shishu Nirjaton Daman Tribunal left his courtroom before 12:15pm. Trials of a huge number of cases have been pending with the tribunal," the CJ said.

Most of the accused, facing cases under Nari o Shishu Nirjaton Daman Act, have been languishing in jail for years without trial, he mentioned.

Sinha asked the judges either to consider the bail prayers of the accused or to dispose of their cases.

He urged the lawyers to cooperate with the judges and magistrates for quick disposal of cases. He also called upon the judges and magistrates to discharge their duties, keeping away from corruption.

Syed Aminul Islam, registrar general of the Supreme Court, and

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Family 'being watched'

FROM PAGE 1

Then again, a motorbike tried to hit him.

She also said her elder son does not come home from Dhaka out of fear.

"We are not saying anything against the government... We just want justice for my daughter," said Tonu's mother, expressing frustration over the sluggish progress of the case.

Meanwhile, the investigators say they would now seek the court's permission to check if the DNA samples collected from Tonu's body match up with those of the suspects to find out the rapists and killers.

Nazmul Karim Khan, special superintendent (Comilla-Noakhali division) of the CID of police, hoped that they would be able to carry out the DNA matching very soon.

"Through investigation, we will find out the killers. It is the post mortem that will determine the cause of death," the CID official told The Daily Star.

He added that the doctors' failure to determine the cause of death hampered their investigation.

It was the DNA test result that found spermatozoa of three males on Tonu's clothes. Disclosing the findings on May 16, CID officials said Tonu was raped before she was killed. This exposed flaws in the first autopsy that "failed to find" evidence of rape and determine the cause of her death.

Though the second autopsy on the decomposed body found evidence of "sexual intercourse", it too "failed" to determine the cause of death, suggesting further investigation into it.

Talking to this correspondent, National Human Rights Commission Chairman Prof Mizanur Rahman expressed doubts whether Tonu's family would ever get justice.

"Our respected doctors have made all arrangements to stop the trial of Tonu's murder. ... It was covered up. We can now only shed tears but nothing will happen," he said, adding that the evidence of the case was damaged at the beginning of the case.

"Like Sagar-Runi murders, this case too has gone into hibernation. Then, it will go into oblivion and we will not speak about it [the murder] in future," said Mizanur.

Tonu, a theatre activist and student of Comilla Victoria College, was found murdered in a bush in the Comilla Cantonment area on March 20. The killing sparked storms of protests across the country.

It was Tonu's father Yaar Hossain, who found his daughter's body with her head smashed and an injury in her

nose.

The first autopsy was conducted by Dr Sharmin Sultana of Comilla Medical College on March 21.

"No sign of forceful intercourse before death was found. The victim was not pregnant. No definite opinion as to the death could be given," stated the first autopsy report made public on April 4.

The police inquest too claimed to have found no sign of injury or assault on any part of Tonu's body.

Two youths killed in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Two youths were killed in Panchlaish area of Chittagong city last night.

The dead, Mizanur Rahman and Md Yasin, both aged around 18, were from Shanti Colony in Panchlaish.

Contacted, Sub-inspector Md Razaque of the police station, said two groups of youths clashed on the campus of M Nazer Primary School around 9:00pm. The reason for the clash could not be known until midnight last night.

Locals later found the body of Mizanur in the school compound and sent it to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Yasin's body was found at Amin Colony near an Ansar camp. We are looking into whether he was killed in the same incident," the SI added.

The two bodies bore marks of stabbing, said hospital sources.

Hilsa now

FROM PAGE 1

caught hilsa weighing up to 900 grams. But usually most of the catch was smaller in size and weighed between 200 and 500 grams.

Mohammad Sultan Mahmud, fisheries officer in Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar, said hilsa makes its way to Hakaluki through the Kushiya river in Sylhet.

"If there is a flash flood in the haor areas, storm water flows down to the Meghna river through the Kushiya river. And hilsa enters Hakaluki from the Meghna," he said.

Fishermen get hilsa in Hakaluki only if there is an early flash flood in the haor areas, according to Sultan.

Towhidur Rahman, officer of Center for Natural Resource Studies (CNRS), said fishermen have been netting hilsa in the haor areas since 2014. The volume of catch, however, has increased this year.



Bangladesh High Commissioner in India Syed Muazzem Ali presents a replica of boat to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at her office in Kolkata yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Power determines stance

FROM PAGE 1

"We want to make it clear that everybody has the right to seek justice even if he is a criminal and what the government is doing now is nothing but gross violations of human rights."

Hasina had kept voicing concern against the menace.

Again on January 15 of the same year, Hasina accused the BNP-led government of letting loose "state terrorism" involving a special force which she said had killed by then 200 people without trial.

She was addressing a discussion of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the pro-Awami League student body, on the occasion of the organisation's 57th founding anniversary at Ramna Park in the city.

"We will not kill people by crossfire, we will improve law and order through justice and upholding human rights," she said, adding, "Today killing without trial takes place only to protect the

godfathers of criminals."

On May 14, 2005, the AL chief also demanded a judicial enquiry into the extra-judicial killings.

Hasina on July 18, 2006 said the then ruling BNP-Jamaat alliance resorted to extra-judicial killings to cling on to power and to this end they even smeared the image of the Rapid Action Battalion.

"Though called an elite force, Rab is now involved in snatching and robbery behind the garb of 'crossfire'. They have created a record in mass killings ... this massacre must be stopped right now," she said.

BNP chief Khaleda Zia who is now vocal against extra-judicial killings was silent when the unlawful killings began 12 years ago. She was the prime minister when extra-judicial killing in the name of crossfire had been prevalent following the formation of Rab in 2004.

She did not denounce extra-judicial killings. Instead, she along with many

of her party senior leaders tried to defend the unlawful killings by portraying the law enforcers' success in improving law and order.

For example: Khaleda Zia in January 2005 blasted the AL saying that a party does not want the anti-crime force as their "terrorists" cannot now unleash terrorism. She said Rab had been formed by enacting a law to curb crimes in the country -- one of the main election commitments of her party, the BNP.

But after she found herself out of power following the December 2008 parliamentary election, Khaleda has started emerging as a vociferous critic of extra-judicial killings.

Addressing a rally on September 26, 2011, Khaleda accused Rab of secret killings, and urged foreign countries not to train Rab and police for their human rights violation.

"I demand foreign nations refuse to provide training to Rab and this police," she said.

While addressing a public rally on November 12, 2014, she reiterated the accusation and demanded that the force be disbanded. "The Rab has turned into a killing force while police into a corrupt one."

Khaleda even called upon the United Nations not to hire Rab personnel for its missions abroad, saying they might carry out the same sort of activities there.

If necessary, Khaleda said, the BNP will send documents and reports about the repressive acts of the Rab and police to the international rights bodies.

Khaleda last Saturday said the government was "killing criminals in crossfire" to conceal its own involvement.

Addressing an Iftar party, Khaleda said some "criminals" were being captured even though it was not clear whether they were actually the real criminals. "They are put in crossfire because the information they reveal

while under remand would implicate the government in these acts," she said.

Her party BNP on Sunday at a press conference also demanded a judicial probe into all the recent extra-judicial killings in the form of crossfire.

Interestingly, her party does not say anything on such killings committed during its rule in between 2004-2006. In the last three years of the BNP rule, as many as 746 suspects were killed in crossfire by the law enforcement agencies, according to Ain O Salish Kendra.

The incident of crossfire declined to some extent during the caretaker government's two-year rule from 2007, with 256 killed through extra-judicial means.

AL PLEDGE

In the run up to the December 2008 parliamentary election, the AL had pledged to stop all types of extra-judicial killings. But things remained the same in the following years after

the AL assumed office in January 2009.

In first four years of the AL-led government since 2009, as many as 338 suspects were killed in crossfire. Incidents of forced disappearances and secret killings were also on the rise.

The AL did not make any promise to stop extra-judicial killings in the run up to the January 5, 2014, elections. Until June 19 from 2014, a total of 323 people were killed through extra-judicial means, shows the records of Ain O Salish Kendra. And Hasina did not denounce extra-judicial killings the way she did 12 years ago.

The estimated extra-judicial killings of more than 1,700 people in last 12 years however reveal the bitter truth: the extra-judicial killings appear to have become the norm rather than the exception.

Over the years, this practice seems to have become a Frankenstein, destroying efficiency, professionalism and credibility of our law enforcement