

Govt renews deals with six rental power plants

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday renewed contracts with six rental power producers by five years and also doubled the tariff rate, considering the rise in fuel prices and a weakened taka against the dollar since the first contract was signed.

The cabinet committee on purchase approved the proposals from the furnace oil-based rental and quick rental power plants at a meeting in the secretariat with Finance Minister AMA Muhith in the chair.

The plants that got the extensions are: 102MW Summit Narayanganj Power Ltd in Narayanganj; 100MW Dutch Bangla Power and Associates Ltd in Narayanganj; 100MW Acorn Infrastructure Services Ltd in Chittagong; 100MW Orion Power Meghnaghat Ltd in Narayanganj; 40MW Khanjahan Ali Power Company in Jessore; and 115MW Khulna Power Company Ltd Unit II.

The tariff for Summit Narayanganj was adjusted upwards to Tk 15.45 a kilowatt-hour from Tk 7.78; for Dutch Bangla Power to Tk 15.75 from Tk 7.78; for Acorn Infrastructure to Tk 15.66 from Tk 7.76; for Orion Meghnaghat to Tk 15.75 from Tk 7.78; for Khanjahan Ali Power to Tk 15.75 from Tk 7.78; for Khulna Power to Tk 15.33 from Tk 7.78.

When the plants were awarded contracts in 2010, the price of furnace oil was Tk 26 a litre and a US dollar was Tk

69.35.

The power division renewed the contracts at a time when the price of furnace oil is Tk 62 a litre, while the taka hovers around Tk 80 per dollar, according to UNB.

The government renewed the contracts to ensure a smooth supply of power, as the country would have to wait until 2018 to implement coal-based base load power plants, according to a summary of the proposals submitted at the purchase committee meeting.

The six furnace oil-based power plants signed the contracts with Bangladesh Power Development Board in 2010 and came into operation the following year.

Last year, the government extended contracts with four gas-based rental power plants with renegotiated tariff rates.

In 2014, the World Bank also recommended phasing out the quick rental power plants to ease the government's subsidy burden.

However, Muhith, in 2013, said the country's rental power plants need to be kept in operation until the power supply situation gets stabilised.

Since 2010, the government allowed two dozen rental and quick rental power plants to help the country ride out the stubborn shortage of power at the time. Businesses welcomed the decision.

According to the government's projection, the country's demand for power in 2021 would be 24,000 MW.

Convicted MP Bodi

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Nashreen Siddiqua Lina, a lawyer for Bodi, told The Daily Star that the HC granted bail to her client on the ground that he is a member of parliament and a law-abiding citizen, and he never misused bail granted by the court.

There was no legal bar to the release of Bodi from prison following the HC order of bail, she added.

ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told this correspondent that the commission would move a petition before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, seeking stay on the HC order.

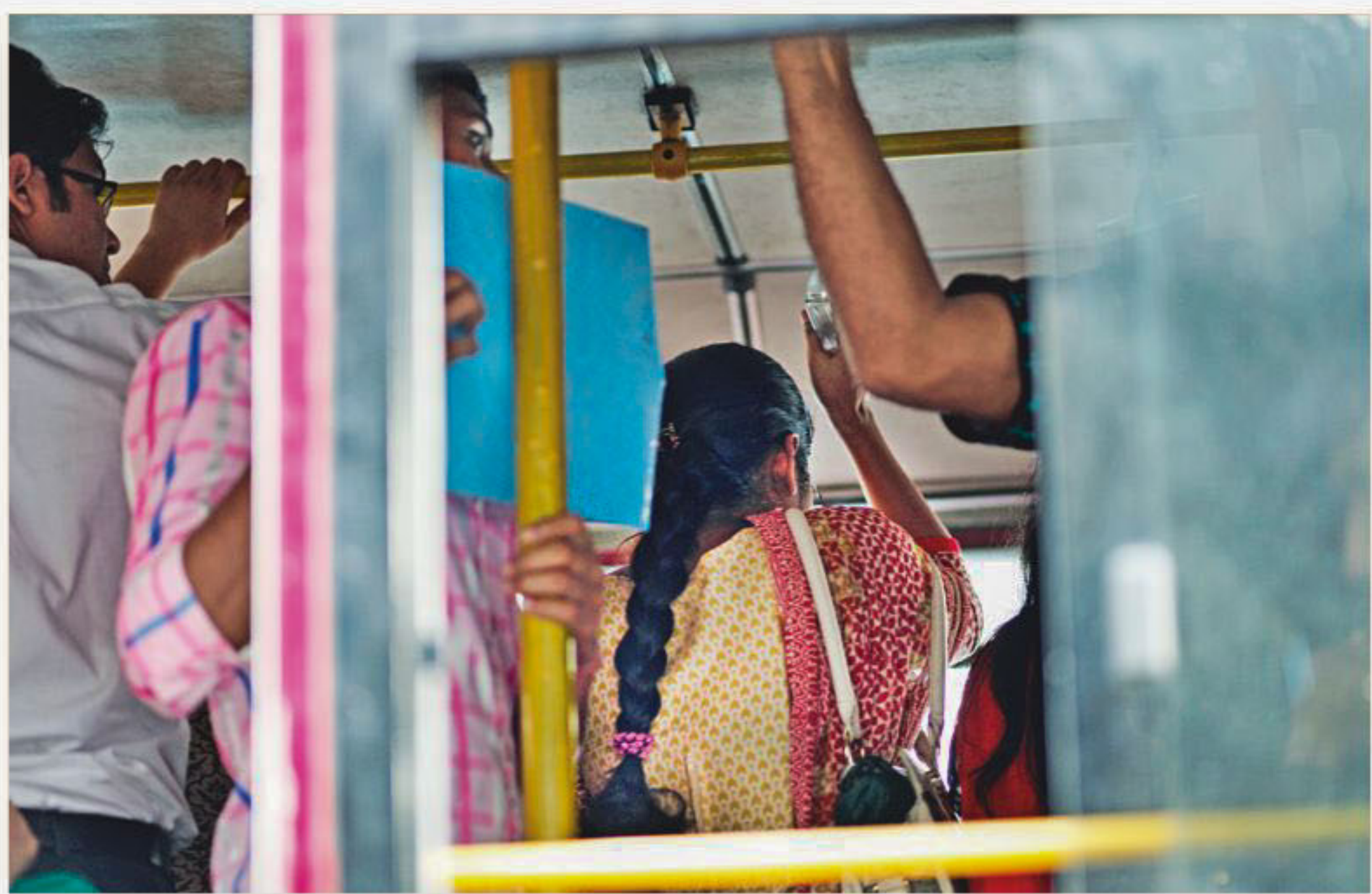
He also said the ACC would also file

an appeal with the HC against a portion of the lower court order that had acquitted Bodi of the charge of amassing wealth illegally.

Dhaka Special Judge's Court-3 on November 2 convicted Bodi and sentenced him to three years' imprisonment for "concealing" and "deliberately providing false" wealth statement to the ACC in March 2014.

It also fined Bodi Tk 10 lakh and said in default, he would have to spend three more months in jail.

On November 10, Bodi filed an appeal with the HC, challenging the lower court judgment.



Be your own hero

SUMAIYA ZAMAN

If you are a woman and a regular commuter in the city, then you are no stranger to various forms of harassment by random strangers. And you know from experience how helpless it feels in those awkward moments.

Sometimes you daydream a knight in shining armour coming to your rescue. But they don't and you wonder how you will deal with the situation next time.

I'm no proponent of violence and, being a lawyer, certainly no advocate for taking the law into your own hands. But then there are those moments when you feel what if you did just that?

A few days ago, on my way to Farmgate from Moghbazar, I was standing near the Moghbazar intersection waiting to climb into a bus. As I was climbing in it, I could feel an indecent push, not one of those you would get from a fellow passenger when you are both fighting your way into the bus.

I cringed and I turned around, only to find a middle-aged man, chucking as he flashed his teeth. Something inside me right away

told me to be wary of the man.

Inside, no seats were available, but the bus was not overcrowded either. When I got in, only two men were standing; and they quickly moved back to give me some room to stand.

But this "good friend" of

pushed the brake, this guy fell over me. I angrily reacted, and he hastily moved back.

As we were crossing Bangla Motor, he came closer. Now he was standing so close that I could feel his breath on my neck.

This was when I decided to be my own hero. I turned around and with all the might I could gather, I took the law into my own fists: I landed a punch on his face.

He was startled and frightened even by the quickness of it all. Even so, he tried to create a scene, but couldn't as other passengers were in my support.

By then we crossed the Karwan Bazar intersection, when the bus was stopped by a traffic cop who sensed the trouble inside the bus.

The policeman climbed in and asked me what had gone wrong. I told him and asked him to take action against him, which came promptly. The cop slapped him and took him off the bus.

"You did a good job, and all girls should be as brave," said the policeman.



mine had other ideas, it transpired, so he stuck to me. I ignored or rather pretended to ignore and stood holding a seat where a woman was seated. This guy was standing right behind me.

Apparently, as the driver

Rajshahi dist BNP leader

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injury over his left ear was smaller than the one over his right ear," he said.

Quoting the victim's family, Shahdat Hossain, officer-in-charge of Coalia Police Station, said the incident might be an act of suicide as he was facing legal action over around Tk 56 crore unpaid loans.

"We have not yet reached a conclusion. Detectives, Rab, CID, crime scene experts and senior police officials are interrogating the family members and investigating the incident," the police official said.

Police said they recovered a licenced pistol, two empty shells, a blood-stained sandal from the victim's home in Hoseniganj area, said the OC.

Police found the sandal near the fence of the home and blood marks between the fence and the living room, where Mainul was found, he said.

After returning home around 1:30pm, Mainul sat in the living room of their two-storey building in front of Rajshahi Fire Service and Civil Defence office, said the police official, quoting Mainul's family.

Victim's son Limon told journalists on the RMCH premises that sitting on a chair, his father shot himself dead as he had been "suffering from depression" for a long time.

Ezharul Islam, firefighter of Rajshahi Fire Service and Civil Defence office, said they rushed to the house after hearing screams. They found Mainul's family members taking blood-stained Mainul towards the main gate of the house.

The family members sought their help for taking him to a hospital.

Ariful Islam, a doctor of RMCH emergency department, said Mainul was dead on arrival. He had been bleeding profusely.

Apart from his wife, Mainul had two daughters and a son.

Wishing not to be named, a police official said Mainul's family claimed that he committed suicide, but the evidence from the crime scene creates doubt.

He said police found evidence of three bullets fired at the spot and bullet marks were seen on the wall of the living room and a vehicle parked near the room.

The police official also claimed that there was an attempt to destroy the evidence.

Seeking anonymity, one of Mainul's friends said he had an "affair" and he was going through some family trouble over the matter. He had lunch and a cup of tea with friends before returning home.

Mainul was never concerned about his unpaid loans, his friend said. He, however, declined to give any more details.

Police picked up six people, including victim's brother-in-law and his two house helps, for interrogation.

Ivy wants Hasina to intervene

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premier's intervention in the matter.

"It is the party President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who will decide on it. I will accept whatever decision she makes," said Ivy, who has recently been made vice president of the district AL unit.

Earlier, she told local journalists at her office, "I haven't done anything controversial for which she [Hasina] wouldn't give me nomination."

Talking to The Daily Star last night, she said, "I won't take part in the election, going against the party decision. Let the leader [party chief] decide... I will work for the candidate the party nominates."

About the city AL's decision, the mayor said "a single individual's voice" cannot be deemed as the voice of the grassroots.

"How many voices from the grassroots were there at Monday's meeting?" asked Ivy.

City AL Vice President Chandan Seal, who presided over the meeting, said none of the party leaders proposed Ivy's name at the meeting.

Asked whether Shamim Osman had any influence over the grassroots leaders' meeting, he said 149 of the 155 city unit leaders joined the meeting, and all of them proposed Anwar's

name.

Claiming that Shamim had no role in it, Chandan said the party's grassroots leaders don't like Ivy for her controversial comments on the party and its chief.

He noted that grassroots leaders' opinion in selecting candidates is important in the local body election.

Contacted, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader said it is not right that party nominee would always be picked from the list prepared by the grassroots.

The party's nomination board for local body election would finalise the selection of candidate based on various survey reports, said Quader, also road transport and bridges minister.

Nominations were given this way in the last union parishad and municipal elections, he added.

In the 2011 NCC election, the AL backed Shamim Osman but it failed to stop Ivy from joining the race. She defeated her archrival Shamim by more than one lakh votes.

The Election Commission recently announced polls schedules for the next NCC elections. The last date for submission of nomination papers is November 24 and that for withdrawal of candidacy is December 4. Election symbols would be given to the candi-

dates on December 5.

BNP STILL UNDECIDED

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir said they were yet to decide on participating in the election.

"We will sit in a day or two to decide on it and let you know," he told this correspondent.

However, several BNP leaders have already started lobbying with the party high command for getting party ticket.

District BNP General Secretary ATM Kamal and city BNP leader Sakhawat Hossain Khan are running publicity campaigns as BNP's prospective mayoral candidates. At the same time, they are lobbying with key central leaders to get party nomination, said BNP insiders.

Narayanganj District BNP President Taimur Alam Khandakar, who contested the 2011 polls as a pro-BNP candidate, showed unwillingness to take part in the mayoral election.

He, however, told this correspondent yesterday that there was still scope for discussion on the matter at party forum.

The Jatiya Party is likely to pick Parvin Osman, wife of former JP lawmaker and Shamim's brother Nasim Osman, as its candidate, said party sources.

Turn decisions

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from 115 countries are participating in the COP-22, also known as the global climate summit.

Hasina called for global efforts to address the issue of climate-induced migrants to achieve the SDG objectives.

"Unless we address this challenge of climate-induced migrant issue appropriately, we would never be able to attain the objectives of Sustainable Development Goals," she observed.

The Bangladesh premier urged all to join hands to consolidate the global partnership to fight perilous threats of climate change.

Pointing out that Bangladesh is one of the first countries that signed and ratified the Paris Agreement, the PM said lives and livelihoods of millions of people would continue to be at risk unless the world leaders deliver to their commitments on climate change issues.

"We must be prepared to share equitable burden to fulfil our promises of making the world a safer and better place for our future generation."

Hasina said Bangladesh is the first country to set up a Climate Change Trust Fund of \$400 million from its own resources. Bangladesh also achieved success in disaster management although its coastal areas are highly vulnerable to climate-related calamities.

The PM highlighted Bangladesh's disaster management programmes, including early warning system, construction of cyclone shelters and river weeds cultivation, saying these measures significantly reduced loss of lives and properties during disasters.

Stressing the need for ensuring water security, Hasina, also a member of the UN High Level Panel on Water, reiterated her government's commitment to the action plan endorsed by the Panel in New York in September.

The premier laid importance on creating a global fund to support research, innovation and technology transfer to achieve the SDGs on water.

She joined the inaugural session of the conference along with other heads of state and government on Tuesday morning.

Earlier, King of Morocco Mohammed VI, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, UNFCCC Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa and COP22 President Salaheddine Mezouar received the heads of state and government at Bab Ighli, the venue of COP-22.

Hasina arrived in Morocco on Monday afternoon on a three-day official visit. She is expected to return home today.

Govt loses

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according to the BJMC, the largest manufacturer and exporter of jute goods in the world.

The government has to inject money every year to help the BJMC mills survive.

Since 2009, the BJMC has been given more than Tk 6,000 crore for buying jute, paying dues and staff salaries, said a finance ministry official.

Moreover, the state-run corporation is neck deep in debt to state-owned banks. As of December 2015, it owes over Tk 1,200 crore.

"We are a fully-fledged business organisation and are able to market and sell our goods directly. But influential quarters always prevented us from doing so," said a director of BJMC wishing not to be named.

The official said the BJMC produces the best products in the world and there is a huge demand and good prices for these items.

According to the BJMC and market players, the jute minister of the BNP government in 1991 had given a Gazipur-based businessman the sole agency of the BJMC's jute products. If other exporters, including enlisted ones, wanted to buy BJMC goods, they had to go to that businessman, who was dubbed "mini BJMC" at that time.

Then a group of Indian jute traders were able to influence the BJMC and had bought its goods in late 1990s and early 2000s. Then a Sudanese businessman, Amin Abdellatif, who is also honorary consul general of Bangladesh in Sudan since 1991, got strong influence in the BJMC. His country is a major market of jute products, especially B'Twill bags (sacks).

Amin became BJMC's exclusive agent in Sudan market in 2006 and was able to enjoy the benefits for a few years.

When the Awami League assumed power in January 2009, things started leaning to businessmen who are linked to the ruling party.

Mushtaq Hussain, who has been in the jute trade since 1988, came to the scene. He is close to the AL and his wife is a ruling party lawmaker. His identity has made him a powerful man in the BJMC and the entire jute industry.

According to Mushtaq, his Golden Fibre Trade Centre has exported jute goods worth Tk 600 crore only to Sudan in the last five years.

"At least 80 percent of the jute products I exported to Sudan were made by the BJMC," Mushtaq told The Daily

'2 crore illegal Bangladeshis staying in India'

Claims Indian state minister for home

PTI, New Delhi

In an announcement which may start a political debate, the Indian government yesterday said around two crore illegal Bangladeshi migrants are staying in India.

"As per available inputs, there are around 20 million illegal Bangladeshi migrants staying in India," Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijiju told Rajya Sabha in response to a written question.

Rijiju said there are reports of Bangladeshi nationals having entered the country without valid travel documents.

Since entry of such Bangladeshi nationals into the country is clandestine and surreptitious, it is not possible to have accurate data of such Bangladeshi nationals living in various parts of the country, he said.

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Indian defence minister due this month

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Indian Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar will pay a two-day visit to Dhaka from November 30 to chalk out a major upgrade in bilateral defence cooperation, The Times of India reported yesterday.

Quoting unnamed government sources, the daily said a new defence cooperation framework would be discussed during Parrikar's two-day visit to Bangladesh and the framework will lead to escalated military supplies, transfer of technologies, training and joint exercises as well as closer cooperation in counter-terrorism.

"It is likely to be inked when Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina visits India in December. Incidentally, Parrikar will be the first Indian defence minister to visit Bangladesh in years," the newspaper said quoting the sources.

India is trying to counter China's inroads into its neighbourhood, ranging from Sri Lanka, Maldives, Seychelles and Mauritius to Bangladesh, Myanmar

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