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POWER TARIFF HEARING

# Hike proposal draws heavy flak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Utility companies' proposals to increase power tariff at bulk and retail faced heavy criticism during a hearing at the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) yesterday.

The Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB), industries, businesses and left-leaning politicians came down heavily on the proposals.

The energy regulator yesterday organised a special hearing on the CAB's proposal to cut power tariff.

During the first day of the hearing on September 25, CAB said the proposal to increase bulk electricity tariff by Tk 0.72 per unit (kilowatt hour) could not be justified.

If income and expenses were adjusted, there would be 6 paise surplus as per the calculation of CAB and 1 paise as per the calculation of the technical evaluation committee of the BERC, said the rights group yesterday.

"So, the tariff increase proposal is not logical and just," CAB said.

It said if the government had supplied adequate gas to the state-run power plants, instead of private plants, Bangladesh would have saved Tk 1,301 crore.

Gas-based rental and quick rental power plants sell power to the government at Tk 3.37 per unit whereas state-run gas-based power plants could do the same for about Tk 2.02.

Measures like producing less power burning diesel and rationalising capacity payment for rental and quick rental power plants (payments for being available to produce power) could have saved at least Tk 7,843 crore in 2015-16 or Tk 1.56 per unit, CAB claimed.

The savings would have brought down the bulk rate to Tk 3.34 a unit from Tk 4.90, according to CAB.

"Already there is damage. But I would like to request the commission not to pass it," said Prof Shamsul Alam, energy adviser to CAB.

The Bangladesh Power Development Board said when the bulk rate was

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People throng Sheikh Hasina Software Technology Park to attend a job fair in Jessore yesterday. During the daylong event, organised by the park authorities, 35 companies received CVs from around 20,000 young men and women wishing to build career in various fields.

PHOTO: STAR

# Making fences, changing fate

## How a Manikganj village transformed

ZAHANGIR SHAH with ANDREW EAGLE

There was a time when days passed slowly in Jabra village in Baniyajuri union of Manikganj's Ghior upazila. Three meals per day was once a luxury, without any gainful activity to fill seemingly endless hours. These days, however, the hours don't seem long enough. From morning until evening, many families are busy constructing bamboo fencing of the type favoured by fish farmers wishing to protect their ponds. From the fencing industry, most families in Jabra have achieved solvency.

"Over the last three decades the economic situation has changed," says Madari Rajbangshi, 70, from Jabra Mahalhipara village. "Nowadays the village is busy with fence construction."

According to her neighbour Ratan Rajbangshi,



around 120 families are directly involved in the fencing industry, and they employ others. "School and college students work here," he says, "They can earn up to Tk 7,000 per month. It covers not only their education expenses but helps with family living costs as well."

"I have been making fences since I got married," says Amela Begum, 40, from the village. "I can make two panels every day in addition to the housework. The peak season runs from about April through to October; during these months my daily income is about Tk 400."

Local students Masum Mia and Purnima Rajbangshi help their parents during their free time. From bamboo fence construction, household expenses are met with some income left over,

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Local people crafting bamboo fences in the yard of a house in Manikganj's Jabra village recently. Most families in the village have achieved solvency making such fences for fish farmers.

PHOTO: ZAHANGIR SHAH

## Muggers in action wearing DB jackets

### Loot Tk 17 lakh from jute mill officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Six criminals in disguise of Detective Branch officials took away Tk 17.50 lakh from officials of a private jute mill in Hariar area of Rajshahi city yesterday, just four days after a similar incident happened in the city.

Around 12:30pm, the muggers, wearing Detective Branch jackets and brandishing firearms, waylaid the pickup van of Rahman Jute and Spinning Mill. After the vehicle stopped, the men demanded to search the vehicles. Finding the money, they took it, said officials of the jute mill and police.

Fazlur Rahman, managing director of Rahman Jute and Spinning Mills, sent

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## Japan sending green fingers abroad

AFP, Tokyo

Tokyo plans to send green fingers to every corner of the world on a mission to spruce up Japanese-style gardens that have fallen into disrepair.

There are some 500 traditional gardens scattered across the globe -- from France to the United States to Thailand and Argentina -- with dozens now in dire need of help after years of neglect, Japan's land ministry said.

Some 40 gardens need immediate repair work with trees growing out of control and toppled-over stone lanterns among the host of problems plaguing them, a ministry official said.

Worried about a national embarrassment in the

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## British author wins Nobel Literature Prize

AFP, Stockholm

British author Kazuo Ishiguro, best known for his novel "The Remains of the Day" and whose emotional uprooting from his native Japan has left an indelible stamp on his work, won the 2017 Nobel Literature Prize yesterday.

The 62-year-old, "in novels of great emotional force, has uncovered the abyss beneath our illusory sense of connection with the world," the Academy wrote in its citation.

Contacted by the BBC, Ishiguro said he was "flabbergastingly flattered" by the award.

"It's a magnificent honour, mainly because it means that I'm in the footsteps of the greatest authors that have lived. So that's a terrific commendation," he said.

Ishiguro has written eight books as well as scripts for film and television.

In 1989, he won the Man Booker Prize for "The Remains of the Day", which was published the same year, and in 1995, he

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## Suicide blast at Pak Sufi shrine kills 18

AFP, Quetta

A suicide attacker blew himself up outside a Sufi shrine in southwest Pakistan Thursday, killing 18 people amid threats of more attacks in the terror-stricken nation, officials said.

The incident follows a deadly bomb blast at the same shrine in the oil and gas rich Balochistan province in 2005, which killed 35 people.

"A suicide bomber blew himself up after he was intercepted by police guards on duty outside the shrine, killing 18 people including three children under the age of 12 and two policemen, and wounding at least 27 others, 14 of them seriously," provincial home secretary Akbar Harifal told AFP.

Provincial home minister Sarfaraz Bugti confirmed the toll. The incident occurred as Muslims attended annual celebrations of a local saint.

Officials said the attack came amid a new terror threat from four foreign agencies hostile to Pakistan.

"I can tell you that four hostile agencies are planning a major terror attack in Pakistan to undo our gains in the fight against terrorism," military

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**PREMIER cement** **Tigers Profile**

**SABBIR RAHMAN**

Sabbir Rahman is one of the most talented cricketers to have picked up a bat for Bangladesh. The 25-year-old is known to practice exhaustively and has honed his game and his technique to a high level. His precocious talent was first showcased during an 18-ball 33 that won Bangladesh the 2010 Asian Games gold medal match. The three sixes in that innings offered a glimpse of another quality that has excited cricket fans since his ODI debut against Zimbabwe in November 2014 -- his raw power.

Sabbir is part of the new generation of Bangladesh cricketers for whom attack is the only option. He is also a rare breed as he is comfortable against high pace. His sound technique gives him the ability to score runs against most types of bowling in most conditions.

But the attack-at-all-costs approach has its downsides. Although he has four Test fifties from nine matches, his highest score is a mere 66. All too often he is out playing one shot too many. The valiant unbeaten 64 in his debut Test raised hopes that he could adjust his temperament to the longer form, but that has proved to be a false dawn. Although a valuable member of the limited-overs sides, Sabbir is not quite a Test player yet.

কদমতলী ফ্লাইওডার  
বিনিমানে আমরা  
গবিত অংশীদার

আমরা প্রমাণে বিশ্বাসী

PRAYER TIMING  
OCTOBER 6

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4-35 12-30 4-15 6-00 7-30  
JAMAAT 5-10 1-15 4-30 6-05 8-00

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