

ROOPPUR POWER PLANT PM to inaugurate construction of second reactor building today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

The construction of the second reactor unit of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant starts today.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is going to Ishwardi to open the construction as the chief guest, while Deputy Prime Minister of Russian Federation Yury Ivanovich Borisov is scheduled to attend the inaugural ceremony as the special guest.

The construction of the first reactor unit began on November 30, 2017.

Two units -- 1,200 MWe VVER each -- are to be built at Rooppur under the Russian design giving priority to the highest safety measures in Pabna's Rooppur, some 160km from Dhaka. The VVER-1,200 reactor design has already been implemented at Novovoronezh Nuclear Power Plant II in Russia, say Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission experts.

"The government is determined to build the country's first nuclear plant giving priority to safety. The first reactor building is now visible and core catcher is going to be set up for the safety of the plant," Yeafesh

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Construction of the first unit of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant is going on in full swing in Pabna's Ishwardi upazila. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to inaugurate the construction of the second unit today. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO:
STAR

Indian home boss arrives in Dhaka

To meet PM today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Indian Home Minister Rajnath Singh arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a three-day visit to discuss expanding cooperation, strengthening ties and exploring ways to boost the India-Bangladesh joint anti-terror mechanism.



Rajnath Singh

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan received his Indian counterpart at Bangladesh Air Force Base Bangabandhu at 6:00pm upon his arrival by a special aircraft. Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Vardhan Shringla and other high officials were present to welcome him.

Singh would begin his official programmes by calling on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban at 10:00am today.

He is scheduled to travel to Bangladesh Police Academy at Sardah in Rajshahi where the two home ministers would jointly inaugurate Bangladesh-India Friendship Building today. They would sign a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between the two national police academies for training and cooperation

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'Yaba dealer', Rohingya man, found dead in Cox's Bazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Police yesterday recovered the floating bodies of a suspected yaba trader and a Rohingya man from a canal in Leda Ali Khali Hill area of Teknaf upazila.

The deceased were identified as Shamsul Huda, 27, son of Abul Kasem of Leda village, and Rahim Ullah, 23, son of Lalu Miah of Leda Rohingya Camp.

Local woodcutters spotted the throat-silt body of Shamsul and the body of Rahim on the canal around 11:00am and informed the police about it, said Ranjit Kumar Barua, officer-in-charge of Teknaf Model Police Station.

The law enforcers recovered and sent the bodies to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

OC Ranjit said Shamsul, who was a "listed drug trader", was accused in six cases in connection with drugs, arms and murder.

Shamsul's father Abul Kasem was killed in an attack on June 27, 2004.

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Nawaz Sharif arrested upon return home

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Local Geo TV said Sharif and his daughter were taken to another waiting aircraft to be flown out of Lahore, where more than 10,000 Sharif supporters were gathered to greet him.

Their return could shake up an election race marred by accusations Pakistan's powerful military is working behind the scenes to skew the contest in favour of ex-cricketer hero Imran Khan, who describes Sharif as a "criminal" who deserves no support.

Clashes broke out yesterday evening at the main highway entry point to Lahore between pro-Sharif protesters and police who had been deployed in their thousands, a Reuters witness said. There were no immediate reports of injuries.

Mobile phone service had been cut off in mid-afternoon, as Sharif's brother, Shehbaz, led around 10,000 party supporters on a march towards the city centre in defiance of a city-wide ban on public gatherings, according to a Reuters witness.

Nawaz Sharif denied the tactics ordered by the caretaker government that took over in June ahead of the general election, as Pakistan's constitution requires.

"What credibility will these elections have when the government is

taking such a drastic action against our people and this crackdown is taking place all over the country?" he told Reuters at the airport in Abu Dhabi as he waited for a connecting flight to Lahore.

Pakistan's third major political movement, the Pakistan Peoples Party, joined the criticism of the crackdown, with its prime ministerial candidate Bilawal Bhutto Zardari questioning why Sharif's supporters would be prevented from gathering.

"Why is Lahore under siege? Right to peaceful protest is fundamental for democracy," tweeted Bhutto Zardari, the son of two-time prime minister Benazir Bhutto, who was assassinated at a political rally in 2007.

The country's media regulator warned local news channels to abstain from airing statements "by political leadership containing defamatory and derogatory content targeting various state institutions specifically judiciary and armed forces", the regulator said in a statement.

Adding to the tension surrounding the upcoming poll, a suicide bomber hit an election rally of a regional party in southwestern Pakistan, killing 85 people. The bombing was the biggest attack in Pakistan in more than a year and the third incident of election-

related violence this week.

DISCORD WITH MILITARY

Sharif returned from Britain after an anti-corruption court handed him a 10-year jail term and sentenced his daughter and political heir to seven years in prison for failing to prove that money used to buy luxury flats in London in the 1990s was not ill-gotten.

Sharif alleges the military is aiding a "judicial witch-hunt" against him and his Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party. The party's past five years in power has been punctuated by the civil-military discord that has plagued Pakistan since its inception.

The military, which has ruled Pakistan for about half its history since 1947, has denied interfering in modern-day politics. It plans to place 371,000 soldiers around polling stations so there can be a "free and fair" elections, an army spokesman said this week.

Sharif's PML-N leaders say authorities have launched a crackdown against union council leaders, the street-level party workers who bring out people on the streets, detaining hundreds of workers over the last 36 hours.

Sharif's return comes at a time of dwindling fortunes for his party,

which a year ago was considered a run-away favourite to retain power.

Recent opinion polls suggest PML-N is losing its lead nationally to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party of arch-rival Khan, whose anti-corruption message has resonated with many Pakistanis.

Sharif was ordered jailed in a case stemming from 2016 Panama Papers revelations that showed they owned the apartments through off-shore companies. Maryam was convicted for concealing ownership of the apartments. They both deny wrongdoing.

BARRED FROM POLITICS

After the Supreme Court ousted Sharif last July, the courts barred him from heading the PML-N party he founded. His brother Shehbaz became PML-N's president, but Sharif remains the power behind the throne.

Since then, a host of his allies have been either disqualified by the courts, or face corruption cases. Many PML-N lawmakers have also defected to Khan's party.

PML-N has also been riven by internal divisions. Sections of the party oppose Sharif's combative approach against the army and fear it will turn off voters in a deeply conservative and patriotic Muslim nation of 208 million people.

Fifa gains in game

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losing semifinalists to lose again.

Crushed emotionally, both Belgium and England badly needed a break from football. For frustrated fans, it would be all the more difficult to get over their disappointment and be reminded again how close their teams were to the final and the Cup.

All they want right now is to hide themselves somewhere for some time and lick their wounds. But Belgium and England have no choice. They have to take the field once more and play out the frivolous formality on July 13.

It will take Belgium years to get over the heartbreak in their semifinal match against France. The margin of 1-0 will never tell how unfair the defeat was! Belgium dominated proceedings, played an exciting brand of football yet

defensive game plan of Didier Deschamps' men. Quite unabashedly, Belgium footballers wept and vented their frustration openly, with fans on the stands booing France off the ground.

Going back to play a match three days into the heartbreak will be like getting punished twice for no good reason. And what if they lose again? May God bless Belgians!

England too will get little solace from the match. They were in the quest of the Cup they did not win in the past 52 years. This England side was youthful, highly energetic and hungry for success, something that all the previous squads lacked. They were attacking and attractive, playing so aggressively that England started to believe that the trophy was coming home finally.

Suicide blast kills 128 in Pak election rally

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confirmed it was a suicide blast.

The explosion killed Siraj Raisani, who was running for a provincial seat with the newly formed Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), provincial home minister Agha Umar Bungalzal told AFP.

"Mir Siraj Raisani succumbed to wounds while he was being shifted to Quetta," he added. Raisani was the younger brother of former provincial chief minister Mir Aslam Raisani.

The attack was the most lethal since Taliban militants assaulted a school in the northwestern city of Peshawar in 2014, killing over 150 people, mostly children, and one of the deadliest in Pakistan's long struggle with militancy.

It came hours after four people were

killed and 39 injured when a bomb hidden inside a motorcycle detonated near a Pakistani politician's convoy in Bannu on Friday, near the border with Afghanistan.

The politician -- Akram Khan Durrani, a candidate of the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) party -- survived, police said. No group has yet claimed responsibility for that attack.

On Tuesday, a bomb claimed by the Pakistani Taliban targeted a rally by the Awami National Party (ANP) in the city of Peshawar.

Local ANP leader Haroon Bilour was among the 22 killed. Thousands flocked to his funeral the next day.

The Islamic State group has a muted presence in Pakistan but has carried out brutal attacks there in the past,

including the blast at a Sufi shrine in February last year which killed nearly 90 people.

Militants have targeted politicians, religious gatherings, security forces and even schools in Pakistan.

But security across the country has dramatically improved since government and military operations cleared large swathes of territory near the Afghan border in recent years.


Analysts warn, however, that Pakistan has yet to tackle the root causes of extremism, and militants retain the ability to carry out attacks.

The military has warned of security threats in the run-up to the tense election on July 25, and said it will deploy more than 370,000 soldiers on polling day.

Following the series of attacks this week, activists called for Pakistani authorities to remain vigilant to protect candidates during the final days of the campaign season.

"The Pakistani authorities have a duty to protect the rights of all Pakistanis during this election period -- their physical security and their ability to express their political views freely, regardless of which party they belong to," said Omar Waraich, deputy South Asia director at Amnesty International.


Last month, a US air strike killed the leader of the Pakistani Taliban, Maulana Fazlullah, in neighbouring Afghanistan in what the Pakistani army called a "positive development" that also sparked fears of reprisals.



ISPAHANI

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went down to a chancy header on the counter.

It was possibly the best chance for Belgium to lift the trophy for the first time, but it slipped away. The style of play and the skill of their footballers enthralled the global audience since the World Cup kick-started about a month back. Skipper Eden Hazard established himself possibly as the most valuable player of the tournament. Also the best player to wear the No. 10 jersey, the playmaker was just phenomenal in almost every match. Hazard is truly hazardous for opponents.

They were so close to embracing the ultimate glory in football after dispatching five-time world champions Brazil in the quarterfinals. Against France in the semifinals, Belgium again started where they had left off only to be denied by the super-

However, that was not to be. England choked under pressure against a never-say-die Croatia in the semifinal. The quest for their second World Cup after 1966 ended in agonising manner.

Harry Kane, the mercurial marksman and England skipper, fired blanks when he was needed to fire the most. The top scorer with six goals, Kane would feel the pain again if he scores and then remembers that he had failed against Croatia. England should dread playing in this meaningless match.

Neither the teams nor the fans are interested. But Fifa, the game's world governing body, has a pervasive reason to keep the tradition of the third-place play-off going: more revenue. Fingers are crossed for the losers.

The writer is former Sports Editor of The Daily Star



A victim of a bomb blast is brought to a hospital in Quetta yesterday following a suicide blast at an election rally.

PHOTO:
AFP

First-ever

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The machine's "small pixels and accurate energy resolution meant that this new imaging tool is able to get images that no other imaging tool can achieve," said developer Phil Butler of the University of Canterbury.

According to the CERN, the images very clearly show the difference between bone, muscle and cartilage, but also the position and size of cancerous tumours, for example.

The technology is being commercialised by New Zealand company MARS Bioimaging, linked to the universities of Otago and Canterbury which helped develop it.

Drug official

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Sadar Police Station.

Tipped-off, police carried out a raid in the village and caught them red-handed, he added.

A case was filed yesterday, said Mahfuz Alam, officer-in-charge of the police station. A Lalmonirhat court sent the duo to jail in the afternoon.