

NATIONAL GRID FAILURE 2 engineers suspended for negligence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government suspended two engineers of the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh yesterday in connection with the national grid failure on October 4.

The government issued an order suspending sub divisional engineer Allama Hasan Bakhtiar and assistant engineer Mostafizur Rahaman, said Mir Mohammad Aslam Uddin, senior information officer of the power, energy and mineral resources ministry.

The duo used to work for SPMD of Dhaka-1 section of PGC. SPMD (Single Program-Multiple Data) is a data management system for power transmission.

Earlier, the state minister for the ministry Nasrul Hamid told journalists that two engineers would be suspended soon. "Actions will be taken against them on charges of negligence in duty."

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Seeking a momentary respite from the scorching afternoon heat of yesterday, two men take rest lying on the seat of their motorcycles in the shadow of an overpass in the capital's Hatirjheel.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

COVID-19 Six die, 351 new cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six people died of Covid in the 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday, a sharp rise in the number of fatalities reported in recent weeks.

The health directorate also reported 351 new cases of coronavirus after testing 5,988 individuals.

The last time officials recorded six deaths in a day was on September 26.

Of those reported dead yesterday, the youngest was aged between 41 and 50 years. Three of them were men and the other were women; four died in Dhaka division and one each in Chattogram and Sylhet divisions.

This took the total number of deaths to 29,401 and confirmed cases to 20,32,443.

Russia 'repels Ukrainian advances in several regions'

Gunmen kill 11 at Russian army base near Ukraine border

REUTERS

Russia's defence ministry yesterday said its forces had repelled efforts by Ukrainian troops to advance in the Donetsk, Kherson and Mykolaiv regions, inflicting what it described as significant losses against the enemy.

Russia also said it was continuing air strikes on military and energy targets in Ukraine, using long-range precision-guided weapons.

"The goals of the attacks have been reached. All the assigned targets have been neutralised," the ministry said.

Russia said its forces had held positions during "fierce fighting" in the Kherson region and also inflicted blows on

Ukrainian positions in the Donetsk region. In Ukraine's Kharkiv region, Russia said it destroyed three US-manufactured howitzers and a crossing point on the Oskil River, set up by Ukrainian forces to move reserves and ammunition.

The river flows south into the Siversky Donets, which snakes through the Donbas.

Meanwhile, Russia yesterday said it opened a criminal investigation after gunmen shot dead 11 people at a military training ground near the Ukrainian border.

Russia's RIA news agency, citing the defence ministry, said two gunmen had opened fire during a firearms training exercise on Saturday, targeting a group who had volunteered to fight in Ukraine.

The "terrorists" themselves were shot dead, it said.

The incident is the latest blow to President Vladimir Putin's "special military operation" in Ukraine and comes a week after a blast damaged a bridge linking mainland Russia to Crimea, the peninsula it annexed from Ukraine in 2014.

Russia's defence ministry said the attackers were from a former Soviet republic, without elaborating. A senior Ukrainian official, Oleksiy Arestovych, said the two men were from the mainly Muslim, Central Asian republic of Tajikistan and had opened fire on the others after an argument over religion.

One held for raping minor

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

A Joypurhat court yesterday sent one to jail for raping a school girl in the district's Panchbibi upazila on Friday.

Kamruzzaman, 20, resident of Bottoli village, was arrested on Saturday while Jewel Mahmud, 22, and one more are absconding.

Following the arrest, the victim's sister filed a case with Panchbibi Police Station. "One of the accused called the victim to an irrigation pumphouse in Magura village where they raped her," said Polish Chandra Deb, officer-in-charge of the station.

She was rescued by locals and police later sent her to hospital for medical examination.

Bus driver, helper sued for murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed a bus driver and his helper on a one-day remand each for allegedly killing a passenger in capital's Jatrabari on Saturday.

Abu Sayem Murad, employee of an apparel sourcing company, was run over on Shaheed Faruk street after Mohon, helper of the bus, allegedly pushed him off the vehicle following a scuffle.

"Murad's brother Abu Sadat Sayed filed a case with Jatrabari police early yesterday, accusing Mohon and driver Shah Alam," said Sikder Mohitul Alam, inspector (investigation) of the station.

After the incident, locals torched the bus and assaulted the accused, after which they were taken to DMCH by police.

Speaking to journalists, Mohon claimed Murad tried to get off the bus in haste and was run over.

Gatco graft case hearing adjourned

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday adjourned the hearing of the Gatco graft case, filed against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and 14 others, till January 29, 2023.

Judge Shaikh Nazmul Alam of the Special Judge's Court-3 passed the order after BNP leader Khondaker Mosharraf Hossain's lawyer Taherul Islam Tuhid submitted an application in this regard.

The defence lawyers have taken 43 dates for hearing so far.

Masud Ahmed Talukder yesterday represented Khaleda in the court, while the 14 other accused, who are now out on bail, were present at the hearing.

On September 2, 2007, the ACC filed the Gatco case with Tejgaon police against Khaleda and several others for misappropriating around Tk 1,000 crore.

92 refugees found on Greek-Turkish border

AFP, Athens

Ninety-two migrants were found almost naked and bruised after allegedly being forced across the Evros river from Turkey into Greece, Athens said yesterday.

EU border agency Frontex confirmed to AFP the arrival of the group in circumstances which the Greek ministry for civil protection said sent out an "inhuman image."

"The Frontex officers reported that the migrants were found almost naked and some of them with visible injuries," said Paulina Bakula, spokeswoman for the organisation.

Bakula, speaking from Frontex's Warsaw HQ, said Frontex officers worked with Greek authorities to provide the migrants -- mainly Afghans and Syrians -- with immediate assistance.

The poor just can't

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vegetables. We have stopped purchasing each and every non-essential item. I reduced buying medicines for my ailing father," he said.

The impact of the pandemic and the Ukraine-Russia war has unravelled decades of progress made in poverty eradication.

Before the pandemic hit Bangladesh in early 2020, around 20 percent of the population lived below the national poverty line, marking impressive progress made since the country's independence.

According to the Household Expenditure Survey 1973-74, around 82 percent of the population in the war-ravaged country lived below the poverty line.

The rate fell below 50 percent by 2000, 32 percent by 2010, and 25 percent by 2016.

Prof Mustafizur Rahman, distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said the social safety measures should be expanded to support the people hit hard by the surging inflation.

The poverty situation of the 70s should not be compared with the current situation because the income inequality is significantly higher now, he added.

"At the moment, we don't know the exact poverty rate as there is no official survey," he told this newspaper.

Work finally starts in Dec

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sign a contract with another joint venture company led by another Japanese company on October 23 for construction supervision services.

Once the line, formally known as Mass Rapid Transit Line-1, or MRT-1, is completed, it will be able to carry 8 lakh passengers daily.

The 31.24km line will have two parts -- a 19.87km part from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to Kamalapur (Airport route) which will be underground and around a 11.36km elevated line from Notunbazar to Purbachal (Purbachal route).

The airport route will have 12 stations, and the Purbachal route will have nine stations, seven of which will be above the ground. Two stations on the Purbachal route -- Nadada and Notunbazar -- will be built underground and used as an interchange, for passengers to switch between routes.

Besides, another metro rail line -- MRT Line-5 (northern route) that will run between Hemayetpur and Bhatara -- will have an interchange at Notunbazar station of MRT Line-1, shows project documents.

The MRT-1 will be the second of the six lines to be built in the capital and adjacent areas to ease traffic congestion and pollution.

The government has taken a plan

to build around 130km of metro rail network -- with both elevated and underground sections -- by 2030.

Construction of the country's first ever metro line, MRT-6, is now going on to connect Uttara and Motijheel with a 20.1km elevated rail line. Its first phase, from Uttara to Aargaon, is scheduled to open in December.

FIRST UNDERGROUND METRO RAIL

The feasibility study of MRT Line-1 was completed in December 2018. The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council approved the project in October 2019.

Of the Tk 52,561.43 crore, the government will provide Tk 13,111 crore and Japan Tk 39,450 crore as soft loan.

The authorities had a plan to start the physical work of the project in December 2020. Later, they changed the starting date thrice, with the last postponement coming in September this year.

Replying to a question about the delay, MAN Siddique said detailed design of the project was delayed mainly due to the Covid-19 pandemic as many foreign experts could not join.

Asked whether they will be able to meet the deadline, Siddique said they were still hopeful.

He said they would implement the project under 13 packages -- one for

consultants and 12 for civil works.

"We have already earned experience from the first MRT line [MRT-6] ... If we are able to sign all contracts for underground and elevated sections, which are now at different stages, within the next six months, we will be able to meet the deadline," he added.

He said after starting the depot works, they will start work for the underground routes from four places.

The four boring places will be near the airport, Kuril, Notunbazar and Kamalapur in the capital.

Asked about potential public suffering once project works start, he said people may face suffering around the station sites but that would not be for more than three to six months, because most of the works would be done underground.

Revealing different aspects of the project, MAN Siddique in June last year said that 25 trains would be operated daily on this line. Each train to have coaches to carry 3,008 passengers at a time.

It would take 24.5 minutes to go from the airport to Kamalapur, 20.35 minutes from Notunbazar to Purbachal and 40 minutes from Kamalapur to Purbachal.

The trains will run at intervals of 2.5 minutes on the airport route, and 4.35 minutes on the Purbachal route.

Two countries agree on energy collaboration

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He is scheduled to leave today.

At the delegation-level meeting yesterday, the two countries renewed one MoU on energy supply, signed an air service agreement and two other MoUs on employment of Bangladeshi workers and recognition of certificates for the seafarers.

"I am very happy that we could sign the MoU on labour recruitment. We have major stake in it," Nahida Rahman Shumona, Bangladesh high commissioner to Brunei, told The Daily Star.

She said now both countries can meet on a regular basis and address any problems related to recruitment, treatment and welfare of the workers.

Officials concerned said some 20,000 Bangladeshis work in Brunei. Setting a minimum wage, insurance and reducing recruitment costs are some of the issues that need to be ensured for the workers' welfare.

According to a joint statement, the two countries agreed to discuss the possibility of recruiting more workers in Brunei from Bangladesh, including skilled and professional manpower, and managing the recruitment process in a transparent, orderly and

ethical manner.

Noting the MoUs on agriculture, livestock and fisheries cooperation signed in 2019, they agreed to explore potential projects under them.

"Brunei wants Bangladesh to provide its expertise in these sectors," an official said.

The Bangladesh prime minister and Brunei sultan acknowledged with satisfaction that the relationship has reached a new height with the visit, while agreeing to work closely together as development partners given the strong commonalities existing in faith, tradition and culture, and shared vision of prosperity, peace and stability.

Both sides stressed the need for an MoU on health sector cooperation for the recruitment and training of healthcare professionals, and specialised and pharmaceutical services.

The two sides agreed to further deepen mutual cooperation in the regional and international forums, including the UN, OIC, the Commonwealth and ASEAN Regional Forum.

Brunei appreciated Bangladesh's continued interest to strengthen its relations with ASEAN and assured

its support for Bangladesh's bid to become a Sectoral Dialogue Partner of ASEAN.

The two leaders agreed to broaden the scope of existing defence and security cooperation, disaster response and humanitarian operations.

Bangladesh expressed gratitude to Brunei for its political support for the much-awaited and expeditious repatriation of over a million Rohingyas, displaced from the Rakhine State of Myanmar and sheltered in Bangladesh.

They agreed to strengthen the existing bilateral mechanisms, including regular meetings at the level of foreign minister.

Both sides identified trade and investment as areas of vital bilateral cooperation and expressed their keenness to work to increase the volume of two-way trade, which is currently far below the potential.

Bangladesh offered Brunei the advantage of investment in the Special Economic Zones of Bangladesh.

Brunei also invited Bangladesh to consider investing in its economic diversification activities like the food, agriculture and aquaculture industries.

Info secy sent on retirement

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additional secretary to the textiles and jute ministry.

He joined Bangladesh Civil Service in 1991 as an officer of the 10th batch of the BCS (administration) cadre. He worked in the field of administration for most of his career.

He acted as assistant

commissioner, assistant commissioner (land); 1st class magistrate; upazila nirbahi officer; additional deputy commissioner; chief executive officer, zilla parishad; director, department of environment; and member of national housing authority (land and asset management).

Cops sue 400 BNP men

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the allegation and said BNP men suddenly started hurling brick chunks without any provocation, triggering the clash.

On Saturday afternoon, BNP held a rally on the Mymensingh Polytechnic Institute premises in presence of hundreds of its activists, including from adjoining districts Sherpur, Jamalpur, Netrakona, Tangail, and Kishoreganj.

At the end of the rally around 3:30pm, several hundred activists from Netrakona gathered at the Krishnachura Chattar near Mymensingh Railway Station to catch a train home.

At the same time, AL men were attending a sit-in programme there.

A clash broke out between the rival groups and the engaged in chases and counter chases, said locals and witnesses.

On information, police rushed to the spot, fired two sound grenades

and lobbed a teargas shell to disperse the groups, said Mirza Mohammad Mukta, a sub-inspector of Government Railway Police in Mymensingh.

Some five to six people including three police personnel were injured in the violence, said Kotwali Police Station OC Akanda.

As part of BNP's planned divisional programmes, its Mymensingh city unit organised the rally to protest the price hike of daily essentials and fuel, the deaths of five party men in police action in Bhola, Narayanganj, Munshiganj and Jashore, and to demand party Chairperson Khaleda Zia's unconditional release.

The BNP also alleged that an undeclared transport strike was enforced in Mymensingh division to prevent BNP men from joining the rally and they faced various obstacles, threats, and attacks on their way there.

A stunning start

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wickets of Dhananjaya de Silva (12) and captain Dasun Shanaka (29) with his left-arm pace.

"I'm a little bit speechless at the moment, what we've just achieved is above what we thought we could do," said Frylinck.

"Now I'm just very excited at this point in time.

"Myself and JJ (Smit) got us to a competitive total and the bowlers just stepped up and it was unbelievable."

Sri Lanka crashed to 21 for three and their chase was all but over when Shanaka fell for 29, his team still 76 runs short with three wickets in hand.

"I think the surface played really well but the execution was not there when it comes to their bowling," said Shanaka.

"Once we lost three wickets in the powerplay, we were out of the game

... We've got a good team but it's all about the process.

"When we're chasing 160 we need (the top order) to kick in. And the bowlers need to hit the right areas."

Meanwhile, in the second match of the day, led by Bas de Leede, Netherlands edged out the United Arab Emirates by three wickets in a tense low-scoring match.

Skipper Scott Edwards stood unbeaten on 16 as the Netherlands chased down their target of 112 with one ball to spare.

UAE pace spearhead Junaid Siddique returned figures of 3/24 and put the opposition in trouble with two wickets in the 14th over but Edwards held his nerve to get his team off to a win in round one.

De Leede, an all-rounder who is a pace bowler, led the charge with his three wickets to keep down the UAE to 111-8.