



“Our hope is that climate will be recognised for what it is. It is not a bilateral (issue)... It is a universal threat to the planet.”
US climate envoy **John Kerry** tells Africa Climate Summit

The Daily Star

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

SECOND EDITION



DHAKA WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 6, 2023

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XXXIII No. 226

BHADRA 22, 1430 BS

www.thedailystar.net

SAFAR 20, 1445 HJRI

16 PAGES : Tk 15.00



B4
Hog plum farmers eye higher profits



P11
Childhood friends set for US Open tussle



P10
Priungshu sings his way to Asia Book of Records



P7
Russia downs Ukrainian drones targeting Moscow

Burden of capacity charges heavier than thought

42 state-run power plants sat mostly idle, yet paid Tk 13,446cr in operations cost in 5yrs

ASIFUR RAHMAN

The government run Tongi 105 megawatt power station did not produce a single watt of electricity in 2017-18, 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22. In the whole year of 2018-19, it generated only 2 percent of its yearly capacity. Yet, it received Tk 133 crore in “fixed costs” for operations and maintenance during these five years.

The 210MW Shiddhirganj power station, another state-owned plant, also produced nothing in three of these five years, and generated only 3-8 percent of its annual capacity in two years. The company received Tk 431 crore in fixed cost, commonly called capacity charge, from taxpayers’ money.

Including these two, at least 42 state-

run power stations were paid Tk 13,446 crore in fixed costs between 2017 and 2022, when most of them performed poorly in terms of production, documents show.

The findings by The Daily Star reveal that the government spending on capacity charges for idle power plants is far more than the figure previously reported.

Energy experts and researchers usually question more about the capacity charges paid to private companies known as Independent Power Producers (IPPs). For example, an analysis by the Centre for Policy Dialogue in June showed Bangladesh Power Development Board paid Tk 57,970 crore in capacity charges to IPPs between FY 2017-18 and FY 2021-22.

But when the state-run power

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Buses drop off and pick up passengers right at the end of a ramp of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway in the capital's Banani where vehicles are usually at speed. This increases the risk of people getting run over by vehicles and slows down traffic as well.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

ZERO PRODUCTION PLANTS

FY	GOVT PLANT	PRIVATE PLANT	FIXED COST PAID
2017-18	12	7	Tk 253cr
2018-19	12	13	Tk 778cr
2019-20	18	3	Tk 1,724cr
2020-21	15	0	Tk 334cr
2021-22	13	3	Tk 733cr
TOTAL	70	26	Tk 3,822cr

Bangladesh is misusing the capacity payment model.

Prof M Tamim
Energy expert

UN body voices concern over rights activists’ intimidation

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The UN high commissioner for human rights has expressed concern over the “continued intimidation and harassment” of human rights advocates and civil society leaders, including Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus and two leaders of the rights platform Odhikar, through legal proceedings in Bangladesh.

The legal harassment of civil society leaders, human rights defenders and other dissenting voices is a worrying sign for civic and democratic space in Bangladesh. These cases also represent an important test for the independence of the judiciary in Bangladesh, the commissioner said in a statement yesterday.

Ravina Shamdasani and Marta Hurtado, spokespersons for the UN high commissioner for

SEE PAGE 7 COL 2

ROHINGYA REFUGEES

Repatriation may start within months

Authorities plan to send back 3,000 refugees by December

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Repatriation of the first batch of the Rohingyas may begin within months and 100 refugees could be sent home every day from then on, said officials concerned.

Myanmar has confirmed that it has verified the identities of 2,087 forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals living in refugee camps in Bangladesh.

The repatriation of the first batch will be after a visit of a Myanmar delegation to the refugee camps and a Bangladesh delegation’s visit to Rakhine state either this month or early next month.

The officials said once everything is finalised, every day 100 Rohingyas would be repatriated through the Ghumdhum-Tumbru border in Naikkhanchhari of Bandarban and Teknaf in Cox’s Bazar.

A Bangladesh delegation in Naypyidaw on Monday discussed with the Myanmar authorities all technical issues related to the repatriation of the first batch in detail, a member of the delegation told The Daily Star.

The four-member team was led by

Miah Md Mainul Kabir, director general of the foreign ministry’s Myanmar wing. The meeting was part of a tripartite initiative mediated by China. Sources said the Bangladesh side put emphasis on the repatriation of the refugees to their original villages.

Myanmar has confirmed that it has verified the identities of 2,087 forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals living in refugee camps in Bangladesh.

The Myanmar authorities said they were working to identify the Rohingyas’ original villages.

“They [Myanmar authorities] said they will let us know their decision within a short time,” said a delegation member.

Officials said both Bangladesh and Myanmar agreed that the second “Go and Talk Visit” for the Rohingyas would be held as a confidence-building measure.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Cyber Security Bill placed in JS

Crimes under four sections non-bailable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The much talked about Cyber Security Bill 2023 was placed in parliament yesterday keeping the offences under its four sections as non-bailable.

State Minister for ICT Division Zunaid Ahmed Palak placed the bill that was sent to the parliamentary standing committee on the ministry concerned for scrutiny.

The parliamentary watchdog has been asked to submit its report before the House within five workings days.

Immediately after the bill was placed, Jatiya Party MP Fakhrul Imam strongly opposed it, saying, “There is no fundamental difference between the proposed law and the Digital Security Act. The proposed law has been termed a black law by TIB.”

On August 30, Transparency International Bangladesh said, “The

SEE PAGE 7 COL 2

CAPACITY CHARGE

Tk 104,926cr paid to 114 pvt plants in 15yrs

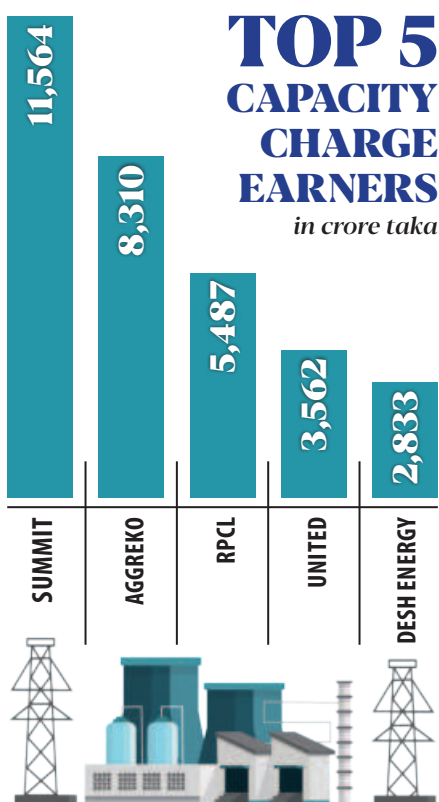
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The present government in its three terms has paid a total of Tk 104,926 crore to 82 independent power producers (IPP) and 32 rental power plants in capacity charges or rental payments, State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid told parliament yesterday.

The amount was paid in the last 15 years since 2009, when the current Awami League government came to power.

Of the sum, Bangladesh-China Power Company Plant (Payra power plant) was paid the highest – Tk 7,455 crore, the state minister said in a scripted answer in response to a question from Gonoforum MP Mokabbir Khan.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



Tigers begin Super 4 against Pakistan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following an emphatic victory over Afghanistan, a confident Bangladesh side will begin their Asia Cup Super Four campaign against a strong Pakistan side at Gaddafi stadium in Lahore today. The match will get underway at 3.30 pm Bangladesh time.

Bangladesh had their backs against the wall following a crushing five-wicket defeat against Sri Lanka in their first match of the tournament, but bounced back with an 89-run over Afghanistan, and in the process confirming a Super Four berth.

Shakib Al Hasan and Co can now start afresh against the hosts of the tournament, who are in marauding form.

The build-up for the big match was far from ideal as Bangladesh lost Najmul Hossain Shanto – the highest run-getter of the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



Sri Lanka players celebrate their two-run victory over Afghanistan in a thrilling Asia Cup fixture at the Gaddafi International Cricket Stadium in Lahore yesterday. After having posted 291, the co-hosts of the tournament bundled out the Afghans for 289 despite a massive scare from the Hashmatullah Shahidi-led side. Eventually Sri Lanka progressed to the Super Four stage as Group B winners with four points, followed by Bangladesh on two points.

PHOTO: ACC

CYBER SECURITY ACT

Make filing of false cases punishable

BFUJ urges law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) yesterday urged the government to include in the proposed Cyber Security Act a section to allow actions against those who would file false cases to harass people.

It also suggested that a journalist or a media expert be included in the “National Cyber Security Agency”, the formation of which is proposed in the draft CSA, in order to avoid troubles at the very start of legal proceedings.

Senior journalist Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul placed a letter containing BFUJ’s observations and recommendations before Law Minister Anisul Huq at a discussion at the Jatiya Press Club. It was organised by the federation.

The letter read: “The law minister himself admitted that there has been misuse and abuse of the Digital Security Act. Cases were filed against many just to harass them. I request you [the law minister] to consider incorporating these sections or sub sections into the Cyber Security Act, so it does not follow the same path [as the DSA].”

The federation also raised objections to eight sections of the proposed CSA and demanded they be either amended or scrapped.

One of the sections they demanded an amendment to was section 21, which criminalises any kind of propaganda against the Liberation War, spirit of the Liberation War,

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5