



MATARBARI POWER PLANT

Tk 93 lakh for two pipe cutters!

MOHAMMAD SUMAN

On January 9, 2024, a small shipment weighing 344.5 kilograms arrived at Chattogram port. The shipment worth \$250,863 (Tk 2.75 crore) contained 19 pieces of small tools such as hammer, metal pipe cutter and silicon guns imported for state-owned Coal Power Generation Company Bangladesh Limited (CPGCL), which is constructing Matarbari power plant in Cox's Bazar.

During physical inspection on January 11, customs officials found that the price of two German-made hammers was shown Tk 1.82 lakh. Similarly, the price of two pipe cutters made by the same German company was shown Tk 92.99 lakh.

Puzzled by such abnormal prices, the customs authorities declined to release the items and subsequently sought explanations from the CPGCL and Power Development Board. The Daily Star has seen the letters dated February 4, 2024.

On March 27, this newspaper visited the website of the German company, KS Tools, to check the prices. The website shows the price of a look-alike hammer is 13.90 euros or Tk 1,668 each, which is 55 times or 5,500 percent less than the imported price.

The company website also shows the price of a pipe cutter that



A road divider between New Market and Gausia is crammed with Eid shoppers desperate to go to the other side. While some jump over the fence, others try to sneak through underneath the barricade. Though a footbridge is only a few yards away, they opt to risk life and limb to get there faster.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Govt to fix rice prices too New rates may take effect from Pahela Baishakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Commerce Ahsanul Islam Titu said yesterday that the government will fix rice prices based on variety and seasonal production costs to combat price manipulation in domestic markets starting this Baishakh, the first month of the Bangla calendar.

"Already, a framework for fixing prices and production costs of rice, including at the miller, wholesale, and retail levels, has been formulated, and the food, agriculture, and commerce ministries will soon make an announcement in this regard following a meeting," Titu said.

Claiming that the government can keep the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

BUET UNREST

BCL, protesters face off over ban on politics

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The demonstrators at BuET yesterday vowed to keep their institution free from politics and banned organisations, while Chhatra League demanded that the university authorities immediately lift the curbs on student politics.

BuET students yesterday boycotted classes and exams for the second consecutive day but did not hold their pre-announced sit-in.

At a press conference on the campus, they said they will return to classrooms only if the authorities ensure that the campus is safe and free from politics and "evil forces".

On the other hand, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) held a rally at the Central Shaheed Minar where its President Saddam Hussain said their demonstrations would go on until the BuET authorities lift the ban on politics.

"The Chhatra League knows how to have its demand met," he said.

He urged the BuET administration to hold students' union elections and immediately give back Imtiaz Hossain Rahim Rabbi, a BCL leader and BuET student, his residency at the dormitory.

Unrest at the engineering university began after a group of BCL leaders, including Saddam, gathered on the campus after 2:00am on

Thursday. Amid protests, BuET revoked Imtiaz's residency at the dormitory the next day over "the midnight incident".

BuET on Saturday formed a six-member committee to investigate the incident.

Protesting students maintain that multiple rules were broken when student leaders from other universities entered BuET campus late at night even though the gates are supposed to be locked after 10:30pm.

Addressing the BCL rally yesterday, Saddam said he went to BuET to meet a friend.

He then asked whether one would need a passport and visa to set foot on BuET premises.

After the rally at Shaheed Minar, BCL activists marched to BuET campus and placed a wreath at the mural of Bangabandhu there.

Meanwhile, BuET Vice Chancellor Prof Satya Prasad Majumder yesterday told reporters at his office that it was for the teachers and students to decide whether to lift the restrictions on student politics.

In another development, ruling Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader said, "In the name of banning student politics, BuET is being turned into a factory of militancy and dirty politics. If this is indeed the case, the government will have to take action."

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5



19 hand tools bought at abnormally high prices

Prices are way more than those shown at manufacturer's website

Customs sought explanations from Matarbari project authorities

Project authorities say prices are high as the items were custom-made

matches with the imported one is 60.27 euros or Tk 7,232 each, 642 times (64,200%) less than the imported value.

Customs sources say that not only these two items, all 19 items of this shipment have been imported at absurdly high prices.

Documents from the NBR show import cost of these products has been shown 5 to 18,545 times higher than the value recorded in NBR's export import database.

This database is basically a storage of foreign trade-related information, including export-import prices of various items, that the customs authorities use as a reference point.

The shipment in question came from Germany and the items, which also included locking pliers, toolboxes, chisels, spanners and car fitter sets, were supplied by KS TOOLS Werkzeuge, on behalf of Japan's Sumitomo Corporation, documents show.

According to the physical examination report by the customs authorities, the price of the pipe-cutting tool is 18,545 times more than the database value, the pipe wrench 1,053 times more, the monkey pliers 912 times more, the screwdriver 833 times more and the hammers 114 times more.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Star INTERVIEW

Bureaucrats to blame for cost, time overruns

Says ex-planning minister MA Mannan on development projects

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Civil servants' clerical attitude, inertia, and red tape are the key weaknesses in managing the economy, said immediate past planning minister MA Mannan.

The 78-year-old said, "We have the technology for faster progress. But the negative side of bureaucracy is that public servants do not usually respond quickly when it comes to implementation."

The bureaucrat for 29 years retired in 2003 as the chairman of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation. He joined the Awami League in 2005.

Mannan was supposed to join the bureaucracy in 1971 but he did not as the Liberation War broke out. He eventually joined after Bangabandhu



SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



RECIPE FOR DISASTER ... A man hangs his wet clothes right next to an active electric transformer at the DIT Market in the capital's Karwan Bazar yesterday. In case of a transformer malfunction or spark, the clothes could catch fire, which could spread to the gas cylinders nearby and unleash a blaze.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

BUSINESS

Digital currency: Is it the future?

The government should proactively explore how the adoption of a digital currency can add value to the economy while maintaining coherence with Bangladesh's social and political climate, experts said yesterday.

Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of Policy Research Institute, said the widespread adoption of central bank digital currencies represents a significant evolution in the monetary system.

STORY ON B1

IGNORING GOVT INSTRUCTIONS Facebook, YouTube may be blocked briefly

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government may temporarily block social media platforms, including Facebook and YouTube in Bangladesh if the companies fail to cooperate in efforts to fight cybercrime and the spread of false information.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Law and Order held at the Secretariat yesterday.

Committee chairman and Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque disclosed the decision to reporters after the meeting.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



বাংলাদেশ নির্বাচন কমিশন

নির্বাচন কমিশন সচিবালয়

আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা

www.ecs.gov.bd

উপজেলা পরিষদ নির্বাচন ২০২৪

আগামী ৮মে ২০২৪ তারিখে ৬ষ্ঠ উপজেলা পরিষদের প্রথম ধাপের নির্বাচন অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। এ নির্বাচনে চেয়ারম্যান, ভাইস চেয়ারম্যান ও মহিলা ভাইস চেয়ারম্যান পদে অনলাইনে মনোনয়নপত্র দাখিল বাধ্যতামূলক করা হয়েছে।

নিম্নলিখিত পদ্ধতিতে অনলাইনে মনোনয়নপত্র দাখিল করা যাবে:

- নির্বাচন কমিশন সচিবালয়ের ওয়েবসাইট (www.ecs.gov.bd) তে প্রবেশ করে "অনলাইনে মনোনয়নপত্র দাখিল" লিংকে ক্লিক করতে হবে;
- প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্য প্রদান করে রেজিস্ট্রেশন সম্পন্ন করতে হবে; মোবাইলে প্রাপ্ত ইউজার নেম এবং পাসওয়ার্ড দিয়ে পোর্টালে লগইন করার পর কাঙ্ক্ষিত পদ অনুযায়ী মনোনয়ন ফরম (ফরম-ক/ফরম ক-১/ ফরম ক-২) দেখতে পাবেন;
- পর্যায়ক্রমে মনোনয়ন, ব্যক্তিগত তথ্যাদি ও হলফনামা সংক্রান্ত তথ্যাদি এন্ট্রি করার পর প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্র যেমন: পূরণকৃত হলফনামা, প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে রাজনৈতিক দল কর্তৃক মনোনয়ন, আয়কর প্রদান সংক্রান্ত কাগজপত্র ইত্যাদি স্ক্যান করে pdf আকারে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে;
- পে-অর্ডার/চালানের মাধ্যমে অথবা অনলাইন পেমেেন্ট মেথড ব্যবহার করে জামানত বাবদ নির্ধারিত অর্থ প্রদান করে মনোনয়ন দাখিল সম্পন্ন করতে হবে।

বিশেষভাবে উল্লেখ্য যে-

- অনলাইনে মনোনয়ন দাখিলের সময় প্রার্থী, প্রস্তাবকারী এবং সমর্থনকারী তিন জনের উপস্থিতি বাধ্যতামূলক। অনলাইনে মনোনয়ন ফরম পূরণের সময় তিন জনেরই লাইভ ছবি তুলে জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের ডাটাবেজে রক্ষিত মুখাবয়বের সাথে শনাক্ত করা হবে।
- মনোনয়নপত্র আংশিক পূরণ করে সংরক্ষণ করে রাখা যাবে। মনোনয়নপত্র দাখিলের শেষ সময় পর্যন্ত তথ্য সংশোধন করা যাবে। তবে চূড়ান্ত দাখিলের পর আর কোনো সংশোধন করা যাবে না।
- মনোনয়নপত্রের যেকোন অংশ পূরণ করার পর চূড়ান্ত দাখিলের পূর্বে pdf আকারে ডাউনলোড করা যাবে।
- এছাড়া, চূড়ান্ত দাখিলের পরও মনোনয়নপত্র, হলফনামা ডাউনলোড করা যাবে।

কারিগরি ও পদ্ধতিগত সুবিধার্থে মনোনয়নপত্র দাখিলের শেষ দিনের ছাপেক্ষা না করে হাতে মণ্ডিত সময় নিয়ে অনলাইনে মনোনয়নপত্র দাখিলের জন্য সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রার্থীদের অনুরোধ জানানো যাচ্ছে।