

Rooppur, Matarbari, metros to get highest ADP allocation

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and ASIFUR RAHMAN

The government is set to increase budget allocation for quick completion of the Rooppur nuclear and Matarbari coal-fired power plant projects.

Several metro rail projects are also going to get more funds.

The Tk 2,65,000 crore Annual Development Programme (ADP) will be placed at today's National Economic Council meeting where allocations will be finalised.

Planning ministry officials say the aforesaid projects may get Tk 34,043 crore, which is 12.84 per cent of the ADP.

Six projects related to Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant are the top recipients of funds. The projects will get a total Tk 12,544 crore, up from the current fiscal year's Tk 11,621 crore.

The 2,400MW power plant, worth Tk 1,14,225 crore, is the biggest ever development project in Bangladesh. As



of December last year Tk 68,248 crore has been spent. In the 2023-24 fiscal year, it got Tk 9,706 crore, while in the 2024-25 fiscal year it will get Tk 10,502 crore.

The government hopes to see it generate power by March 2025 or sooner.

Six transmission lines from the plant are being set up. Four of the lines are almost 90 per cent complete, according to Power Grid Company of

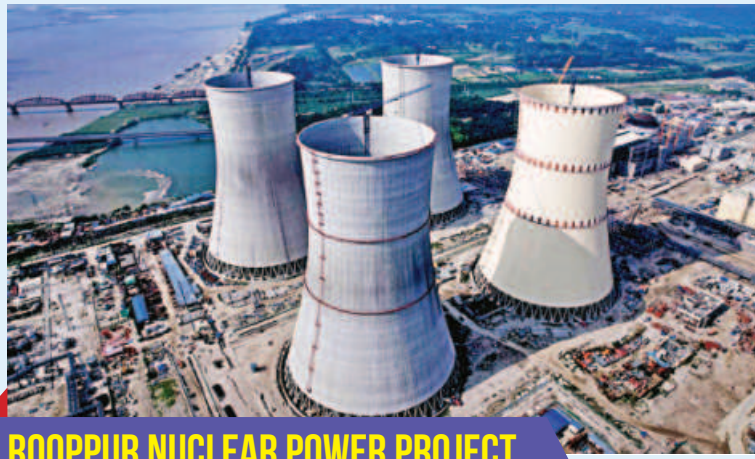
Bangladesh.

When the lines are set, a unit of the plant will start operation, officials said.

Setting up of lines across the Padma, which saw 40 per cent progress, will be done by October, said Delwar Hossain, the project director.

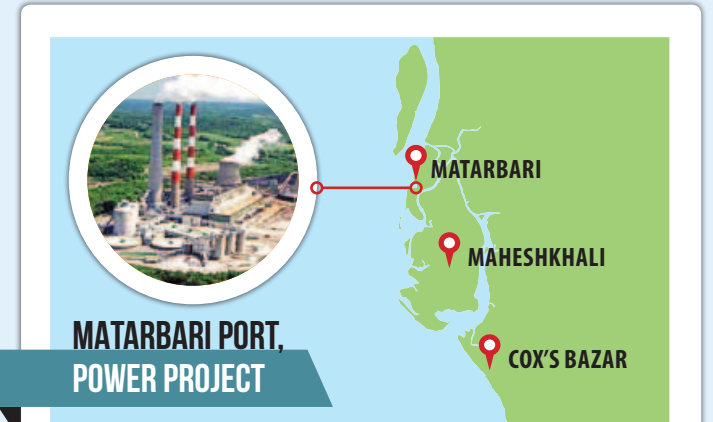
There are five projects – totaling Tk 88,492 crore – related to the power plant in Matarbari, Cox's Bazar. In 2024-25, the projects will get Tk 14,962 crore, up from Tk 12,161 crore in 2023-24.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



ROOPPUR NUCLEAR POWER PROJECT

	TOTAL COST	EXPENDITURE TILL JUNE 2023	ALLOCATION FY24 & FY25
Power plant	Tk 1,14,225cr	Tk 65,930cr	Tk 20,208cr
Transmission line	Tk 10,981cr	Tk 4,994cr	Tk 1,729cr
Other related projects	Tk 5,778cr	Tk 689cr	Tk 2,228cr



MATARBARI PORT, POWER PROJECT

	TOTAL COST	EXPENDITURE TILL JUNE 2023	ALLOCATION FY24 & FY25
Power plant	Tk 51,854cr	Tk 33,249cr	Tk 15,364cr
Port development	Tk 26,782cr	Tk 1,104cr	Tk 8,763cr
Other related projects	Tk 9,856cr	Tk 1,627cr	Tk 2,996cr

SOURCE : PLANNING MINISTRY

	TOTAL COST	EXPENDITURE TILL JUNE 2023	ALLOCATION FY24 & FY25
MRT Line 6 (Uttara - Kamalapur)	Tk 33,472cr	Tk 22,309cr	Tk 3,968cr
MRT Line 1 (Airport - Kamalapur)	Tk 53,977cr	Tk 1,780cr	Tk 4,592cr
MRT Line 5 (Hemayetpur - Bhatara)	Tk 41,238cr	Tk 1,811cr	Tk 1,748cr

'Will rebuild trust, won't look back'

Donald Lu says after meeting Hasan Mahmud

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

In an apparent policy reset, Washington is seeking to rebuild the trust in its relations with Dhaka following tensions in the run-up to the January 7 national polls.

"I've visited Bangladesh these last two days in order to try to rebuild the trust between our peoples," Donald Lu, US assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asia, told reporters after meeting Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud at the foreign ministry yesterday.

"Last year, we know there were a lot of tensions between the US and Bangladesh. The US worked very hard to promote a free, fair and nonviolent election here. And it caused some tensions. This is common in our relationship.

"We want to look forward and not look back. We want to find ways to strengthen our relationship."

Lu arrived in Dhaka on Tuesday morning, held meetings with the civil society members and attended a Bangladeshi food festival at the American Club. He also attended a meeting over dinner at the residence of the Prime Minister's Adviser on Private Industry and Investment Salman F Rahman.

Yesterday, he held meetings with young influencers, Environment Minister Saber Hossain Chowdhury and Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen before meeting Hasan Mahmud.

Donald Lu and US Ambassador Peter Haas also played cricket with Bangladesh national women's team in a city field yesterday.

This is the highest level visit by any US delegation after the January 7 election.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Secondary MPO schools must pay admission fees to govt

Education ministry orders

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

The government yesterday instructed all secondary educational institutions to deposit the admission fees collected from students with the state coffers.

The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) in a notification asked all district education officers to take necessary measures so that the secondary schools deposit admission fees collected in 2023-2024 fiscal year with the government's treasury.

The circular said the list of the educational institutions, along with the copies of the treasury challans related to the deposits, must be submitted to the DSHE within the next four working days.

DSHE sources said they issued the notification

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Major admin reforms shelved for 27 years

Experts blame it on lack of political will, top bureaucrats' resistance

BAHARAM KHAN

The crucial reforms to Bangladesh's civil service have been stalled for 27 years, largely because of the opposition of a section of top bureaucrats and a lack of political will.

At least 16 commissions and committees, constituted in the last 53 years since the country's independence, made recommendations for having an efficient, merit-based and service-oriented civil administration. However, most of those recommendations fell on deaf ears.

Experts say some reform proposals, which have been under discussion for several years, deal with a number of key issues including inefficiency and a lack of transparency. Those problems have been impeding the smooth operation of bureaucracy for decades.

According to them, reform is viewed as a threat to the status, influence, benefits, and promotions of many civil servants, especially those with greater authority. The government also does not want a strong and effective civil service.

A few recommendations by different commissions were put into practice at different times. Those include raising the salaries of the government employees, passage of the Civil Service Act-2018 and raising the retirement

"Most of the high-ranking officials are now more interested in extending their job tenure by securing contractual appointments. The majority of those officials lack professional competence. It is highly unlikely that they will take any measures to reform the administration."

BADIUR RAHMAN
Former secretary

age of the public servants from 57 to 59 years. Centre for Policy Dialogue, one of the leading think-tanks, in its four reports in 2013, 2018, 2020 and 2021 mentioned that "corruption and unskilled bureaucracy" are the two biggest challenges for the development of the country.

The constitution mandates periodic reforms to the civil bureaucracy.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

PGCBL's rejoinder, our reply

State-run Power Grid Company of Bangladesh Ltd (PGCBL) has sent a rejoinder/explanation to our story headlined "Goods worth Tk 16k imported at Tk 2.63 crore" published on May 7, 2024.

We are running the unedited rejoinder/clarification in full along with our response.

The rejoinder/explanation

The news titled "Goods worth Tk 16k imported at Tk 2.63 crore" published on 07 May 2024 has come to our attention. Alleging that "State-owned Power Grid Company of Bangladesh Limited (PGCB) has imported 68 kilograms of bolts, nuts, and washers from India for towers at a cost of 2 Lac 39 Thousand 695 Dollars (\$239,695), approximately 2 crore 59 lacs taka in Bangladeshi currency," which is false and defamatory to the organization. Actually there was no financial irregularity

SEE PAGE 7 COL 4

the BUSINESS

Offshore banking to increase dollar flow

Offshore banking is increasingly becoming a key window for banks in Bangladesh to facilitate investments and international trade by attracting deposits in foreign currencies.

Industry people say offshore banking can play a crucial role in mitigating the persisting forex crisis by extending liquidity support and stabilising the local currency.

"Deposits of offshore banking will be a major source for US dollars," said Mashrur Arefin, MD of City Bank, which has stepped up efforts to draw foreign deposits through its offshore units.

STORY ON BI



A drone shot of the almost finished 16.5km elevated expressway in Chattogram. The photo was taken in the port city's Lalkhan Bazar area recently.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Wait for Ctg expressway nearing end

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

The elevated expressway in Chattogram, the first one in the port city, would be opened to traffic soon, said project officials.

"We have completed all other works except for installation of electric poles, lights, and CCTV cameras. We will also open a ramp alongside the main expressway," Mahfuzur Rahman, director of the project and executive engineer of Chattogram Development Authority (CDA), told The Daily Star on May 12.

The project was initiated to ease the port city's perennial traffic congestion in 2017.

The authorities concerned have already finalised the toll rates of vehicles. Three-wheelers and motorcycles will not be allowed on the expressway.

The city dwellers now depend on only one thoroughfare, resulting in acute gridlocks at places.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 6