Govt approves price for 40MW power import from Nepal

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh has agreed to buy 40 megawatts of electricity from Nepal at Tk 8.17 per unit, including transmission cost, under a five-year agreement.

The Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase yesterday approved the price, ending a long negotiation over hydropower import from the Himalayan nation via India.

Mahmudul Hossain secretary (coordination and reforms) of Cabinet Division, said Nepal will get \$0.640 per unit while India will receive 0.0595 rupee as trade margin.

He said the transmission cost that India would get has not been mentioned in the summary of the However, a Power Division official

said Bangladesh will pay \$0.697 per unit (Tk 8.17), including power price, transmission charge, and trade margin. He said the transmission charge

would vary from time to time. SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



PHOTO: COLLECTED

A 200-metre long queue of students in front of the Sonali Bank branch on Dhaka University campus. The photo was taken on Monday.

Two teachers of St Scholastica's Girls' School sued for sexual abuse

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chattogram

Two teachers of St Scholastica's Girls' School and College in Chattogram city's Patharghata area have been sued for sexually abusing a fifth-grade schoolgirl for over a year.

The accused are Rakib Uddin, 35, who teaches fourth grade, and Surjit Pal, 33, who teaches fifth

Of the duo, Rakib was detained last night for interrogation, confirmed Obaidul Haque, officerin-charge of Kotwali Police Station.

Earlier in the day, the 11-year-old victim's mother filed the case with Kotwali Police Station, said Atanu Chakraborty, assistant commissioner (Kotwali Zone) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police.

"We've accepted the case and received some screenshots of messages sent by the teachers to the victim as supporting evidence. We've launched an investigation into the allegations of sexual abuse brought against the teachers."

According to the case statement, the 11-yearold had been sexually abused by both teachers for

Since 2023, the two teachers have sexually harassed and molested the girl on several occasions. Whenever she tried to resist them, they reprimanded her in class and threatened to fail

in the project.

over the last one week.

AN OFFENCE

or business work

The Daily Star.

he said.

Masud Alam denied his involvement

"Never in my life did I commit any

misdemeanor. After joining as the SF

of Madaripur, I never visited the area

where Benazir sir's project is located.

did not go there even if it was necessary,

Rab Additional SP Shaheda did not

Former IGP Nur Mohammad said

"That would be an offence," he told

Government officials can buy land,

but in keeping with the regulations and

with legitimate income. In Benazir's

case, it must be seen whether this was

followed and what is the source of the

money, said Nur, who was an Awami

League lawmaker in the previous term.

Benazir did not respond to our calls and text messages on WhatsApp.

Benazir refuted the allegations of

and intimidation is impractical as it is

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's home

district and the project area is adjacent

to her constituency," he said.
In addition to his land, the ACC has

so far discovered that Benazir and his

family have shares in 19 companies, two

savings certificates, 22 bank accounts

All his bank accounts have since been

frozen, although ACC investigators say a

large sum of money has been withdrawn

by the time the freeze order could take

Lt Gen Waker-Uz-

and 10 BO accounts.

buying land through intimidation.

In a Facebook live on April 20,

Purchasing land through coercion

respond to our calls and text messages

senior police officials cannot engage

members of the police for their personal

A gruelling 3-day for DU freshers

Sonali Bank's branch on campus.

Imran went to the branch at the administrative building around 12:30pm, only to find a queue of over 300 people. He could not pay the fee until four hours later.

"I did not even have lunch for fear of failing to make the payment," he said. Imran then went to his department

to submit the pay slip and other documents, but was told to come back the next day "because the documents that I submitted require signatures

from the department chair."
Around 9:30am yesterday, he went to the department and collected the papers. He was then asked to submit the papers to the dormitory office. Upon submitting the papers at the Muktijoddha Ziaur Rahman Hall, he got another pay slip for depositing Tk 2,500 to Janata Bank.

Im ran went to the bank's TSC brancharound 10:30am and saw a queue stretching to the Bangla Academy gate, around 300 metres from the bank.

After several hours, he deposited the money and rushed back to his dorm and submitted the payment slip, but hundreds of others were still in the

"The dorm office told me to leave the slip and other papers and come back

between the dorm, faculty, and bank, and hopefully, the process will end

Imran is one of around 6,000 freshers who have been suffering because of the lack of coordination among different offices on campus.

Besides, the mere three-day window, starting Monday, for the admission of such a large number of students is causing the long queue. The admission committee had

earlier requested the department heads to make sure students could pay the dorm and development fees online, but the department heads did not show interest, said a member of the But three department heads from

the social sciences and arts faculties said they were not informed of the This correspondent talked to at least

50 freshers and their guardians, and all of them expressed disappointment that the payments could not be made

A man who came to the campus from Rajshahi for the admission of his daughter said he had been staying at a relative's home for the last few days and spending hours on campus.

"Almost everything is done online these days. But we are having to the next day. I spent two days shuttling queue under the sun. The process is next year," he said.

slow, complex and bureaucratic and it is because the officials involved are not too eager to make it simple and fast," said the father who works at a government department and is not willing to disclose his identity.

Nur Jahan, who was in a queue near the administrative building in the afternoon, said it was difficult for her and her daughter to spend hours under the glaring sun. "I let her stand in line and went to get some water for her. We could become sick from this ordeal."

Prof Mohammad Tanzimuddin Khan, who teaches international relations, said, "When we got admitted in the early 90s, we faced such hassles. But it's 2024, and the admission process has not changed much. It means the university has not progressed institutionally.

Moreover, the administrative officers and employees do not behave well with the students, he said.

Contacted, DU Vice Chancellor Prof ASM Maksud Kamal said there is a lack of coordination between the admission authorities and heads of departments and institutes.

"The university has started making the process online, but I am not sure why the entire system is not online. I took charge a few months ago and I hope that this problem will not be there

Fear forced Hindus to sell their land to ex-IGP

"About four years ago, Taimur asked us to sell the land. As we refused, he said that Benazir had already acquired all the surrounding land and would make sure that we cannot access our land," Swarup told The Daily Star.

Eventually, they had to sell their three bighas of land for Tk 3.8 lakh per bigha, nearly half the market price. With the little money shared among his three brothers, there was no way they could buy any farmland elsewhere.

Another victim of Benazir's allegedly forceful land acquisition is Swarasati Roy, 60, from Borokhola village in Rajoir of Madaripur. Having forced to give up her 31 decimals of land, her only livelihood means, she now works at other people's homes to earn a living. Two to three years ago, Taimur said

she was not the real owner of the land and threatened that Benazir would take it anyway. Eventually, she caved, and had to accept only Tk 2 lakh for the land she bought 20 years ago with loan money and the proceeds from the sale of a cow.

She and her day labourer son now live on a five-decimal homestead, their last remaining piece of land.

Patikelbari village of Gopalganj, were targeted with clever tactics. The man had 10 kathas of farmland

in two plots, growing rice on one plot and watermelon on the other.

Suddenly one day, Benazir's men laid large pipes through his land to sand-

lakh after Benazir's men filled it up with sand. What would I do back home? So I came to India," he told The Daily Star by phone from Thakurnagar, West Bengal. RAB-POLICE MEMBERS AT RESORT Benazir engaged members of the police and Rab for his personal project as well. Locals said that until he went into retirement in 2022, several police and Rab officials were tasked with supervising the construction work of

Two sub-inspectors -- Bachchu Miah and Shahjalal -- were seen at the site most of the time by locals.

Benazir's then staff officer Masud Alam, who later became Madaripur police super, also visited the site frequently, sometimes even negotiating the land purchase, locals said.

Rab Additional SP Shaheda Sultana would also visit the site.

NO ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE Savanna Eco Resort and Natural Park was built on a portion of the purchased land at Machkandi and Bairagitol villages. There are several upscale cottages having architecture replicating the Masai houses of the African Savanna.

For land development at the site, Benazir's men dug up a huge pond spanning about 30 bighas of land in Bairagitol and brought the sand and soil from there, locals said.

According to its website, there is a farm within the resort, several ponds, a swimming pool, boat ride facilities, play zones for children, a country club, a helipad and other facilities.

Tarun Baul

Until June 3, people could visit it for an entrance fee of Tk 100. The government has since taken over the

director of Gopalganj environment office, said the resort was built with a temporary site clearance, but it does not have the final environmental clearance.

A few years ago, the LGED built a road there to facilitate local people's transport. But locals cannot use it anymore, as the resort authorities set up a huge iron gate, allowing only the resort-goers to use it.

"We learned that locals cannot use the road. Our job is to build roads. The local administration can take steps so that people can use the road," said SM Jahidul Islam, engineer of LGED in Gopalganj Sadar.

OBEYED THE ORDER'

highway police station, denied that he intimidated anyone to sell their land.

Shaheb "Benazir went retirement two years ago. The villagers did not lodge any complaint to the local MP, union parishad chairmen and members. I do not know why they are

Taimur said Benazir's staff officer sometimes called him, asking him to verify the land document, and he simply

trees. During the time, IGP's staff officer occasionally called me and I used to visit him. Masud Shaheb can tell everything as he was later made the SP of Madaripur to look after the project. He did everything. They are senior officers, they know everything," Taimur told The Daily Star by phone.

Bachchu Sub-inspectors Shahjalal did not pick up the calls or

Earlier, Bachchu admitted to daily Prothom Alo that he supervised the construction work at the resort site on instructions of senior officials. He defended his action, saying he only "obeyed the orders" of his supervisors.

Zaman FROM PAGE 1 brigade. School of Infantry and Tactics

and Army Headquarters.

He commanded an infantry battalion, the only independent infantry brigade of Bangladesh Army, and an infantry division.

Waker was a distinguished instructor at School of Infantry and Tactics, Non-commissioned Officers' Academy and Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operations Training. He also served as the military secretary at the Army Headquarters.

Prior to taking over as the CGS of Bangladesh Army, Waker had been the principal staff officer of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Armed Forces Division under the Prime Minister's Office.

He is an alumnus of the Defence Services Command and Staff College, Mirpur and Joint Services Command and Staff College, UK.

He has a master's degree in defence studies from National University of Bangladesh. He also completed Master of Arts in defence studies from King's

College, University of London. As the head of the Armed Forces Division, Waker was directly involved in the UN Peacekeeping Affairs of Bangladesh Armed Forces.

He was also nominated as a Gender Champion and Gender Advocate of Bangladesh for UN Peacekeeping Affairs.

As the principal staff officer, he also headed the Bangladesh National Authority for Chemical Weapons Convention as chairman.

Under the Blue Helmet, Waker completed two tours of duty as observer and staff in UNAVEM (Angola) and UNMIL (Liberia) respectively.

He had the rare privilege of commanding the National Victory Day Parade for three consecutive times.

He was awarded the coveted Army Medal of Glory" (SGP) and "Extraordinary Service Medal" (OSP) for his remarkable contributions to the modernisation of the army.

Waker was a keynote speaker in different seminars and symposiums at home and abroad.

Hunter Biden found guilty on gun charges

Trump, convicted on 34 felony counts of falsifying business records to cover up a sex scandal, accuses Democrats of pursuing that case and three other criminal prosecutions to prevent him from regaining power in his rematch with Joe Biden.

Congressional Democrats have pointed to cases including the Hunter Biden prosecution as evidence that Joe Biden is not using the justice system for political or personal ends, having said last week he would not pardon his son if convicted.

The Hunter Biden case was brought by US Department of Justice Special Counsel David Weiss, a Trump

Weiss has also charged Hunter Biden

with three felony and six misdemeanor tax offenses in California, alleging he failed to pay \$1.4 million in taxes between 2016 and 2019 while spending millions on drugs, escorts, exotic cars and other high-ticket items.

Hunter Biden has pleaded not guilty for September 5 in Los Angeles.

prosecution testimony by Hunter Biden's ex-wife, former girlfriend and sister-in-law, who gave firsthand accounts of his spiraling addiction in the weeks before and after he bought the gun in October 2018.

to those charges. A trial is scheduled

The Delaware trial included

Prosecutors also showed text messages, photos and bank records that they said showed Biden was deep in the throes of addiction when he bought the

Thanks to a two-wicket win over

Sri Lanka in their tournament opener

and a closely-fought game against the

Proteas, Bangladesh are now second in

the five-team group. With two points

in two matches, Bangladesh remain

who have all but confirmed their spot

in the Super Eight with six points from

three wins in as many games.

just behind group leaders South Africa,

gun and knowingly broke the law by answering "no" to being a drug user on a government screening form. Biden's lawyers sought to show he

was not using drugs when he bought the gun and did not intend to deceive because he didn't consider himself a drug user when he filled out the form.

The defense called Hunter Biden's daughter, Naomi Biden, who testified that her father seemed to be doing well when she saw him shortly before and after he bought the gun.

The sentencing guidelines for the gun-related charges against Biden are 5 to 21 months, but legal experts say defendants in similar cases often get shorter sentences and are less likely to be incarcerated if they abide by the terms of their pretrial release.

nations the Netherlands and Nepal.

Meanwhile, things could get a bit

tricky for Bangladesh if they go on to

lose any one of their last two group-

stage games as then the Tigers will have

to depend on the results of some other

they suffered against the Proteas, the

Tigers will now need to grind harder

and adapt to the different conditions

in the Caribbean in order to avert any

upset in their upcoming matches and

have a smooth sailing into the Super

Shrugging off the close defeat

fixtures going in their favour.

Not all is lost for Tigers commendable turnaround result-wise.

hospital staff.

event came 17 years ago when they beat hosts West Indies in their tournament opener – the only time they beat a Testplaying nation before the Sri Lanka win in this edition — in the inaugural

edition of the T20 World Cup in 2007. However, things are looking positive for the Tigers this time around. The Najmul Hossain Shantoled Bangladesh, who were rocked iust ahead of the T20 World Cup as they hit the nadir in the shortest format following a shocking 2-1 series defeat against the USA, have made a

struggled to tackle the situation. We

gave first aid to many while some were

admitted. Four are still undergoing

treatment at the hospital," said a

Imran Ali, manager of Shyamoli Housing (2nd Project), said, "My wife,

two children and I were sleeping in our

tin-roofed home when suddenly, we

started having difficulty breathing and

home where many people had already

gathered. Many were vomiting while

some complained of palpitations," said

Imran, who along with his family, had

manager of Smart Technology BD Ltd,

said all 20 staff members of their firm

lived near the scrap shop, and they all

Abdur Rahman Tuhin, deputy

"We rushed to the lane in front of our

our eyes started burning.

treatment at SSMCH.

Bangladesh, who also have a positive net run-rate of 0.075, will now need to do what is expected of them in the final two group games – beat associate

Monday night. He fell seriously ill and later died," Tuhin added. Adabar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mahbubur Rahman, said Kalu, the owner of the metal scrap shop, had fled the area after the incident, but

of the staffer. Kabir stayed with him on

police detained him in the morning. "Kalu told police that he bought a very old gas cylinder a few days ago. When workers were trying to break open the cylinder at the shop early yesterday, it leaked, causing the gas inside to spread to the surrounding area.'

Investigation Department (CID) were examining the cylinder to determine the type of gas. Mohammad Meanwhile,

The OC said experts at the Criminal

Fakhruddin, senior station officer at the Mohammadpur Fire Service and

1 dies, 40 fall ill after inhaling toxic gas

"Deceased Kabir is a cousin of one Civil Defence, said they reached the spot around 4:00am when the gas was still leaking from the 25-30kg cylinder. "It was ammonia gas," said

the officer, who has training and experience in working with toxic gases.

PM likely to visit

FROM PAGE 1 Her China visit was underscored after Chinese Ambassador Yao Wen met her recently. Wen reiterated China's commitment to boosting investment in Bangladesh and enhancing bilateral relations.

Hasina is likely to join the 79th session of the UN General Assembly, which will begin on September 10. She is also likely to attend the BIMSTEC summit in Thailand in October, according to diplomatic sources.

Others, including Apurba Maitra of

fill the ex-IGP's Savanna Eco Resort and Natural Park project site. The plot



Swarup Maitra Swaraswati Roy

that fell within Benazir's project was automatically filled with sand.

"We failed to grow anything for two years. At one point, we were compelled to sell the land to Benazir," said Apurba, who now works as a day labourer.

Like them, several hundred people in Gopalgani Sadar and Madaripur's Rajoir upazilas were forced to sell their family land.

During a two-day visit to Machkandi, Bairagitol and Patikelbari villages of Gopalganj Sadar and Borokhola village in Rajoir, The Daily Star spoke to at least 40 people. They all said they would not have sold their land if it were not for the terror induced in their hearts by the very thought of Benazir

CLEVER TACTICS According to locals, Benazir first bought a piece of land in the area in 2016-2017. The floodgate had since opened as the mighty cop went on a land acquisition spree, with Inspector Taimur Islam intimidating the poor and mostly Hindu

villagers to sell their land. Benazir's men would fly drones and make a map, marking various plots in white and red, presumably to determine which land to target, said Tarun Baul of Bairagitol village.

He recalled that Taimur would eventually approach the targeted land owners and say, "You know Benazir and how powerful he is. If you decline to sell your land, he would surely take it anyway. You will lose both your land and the money. If you agree to sell, I will help you get a handsome price."

When someone refused to sell their land, Benazir would buy the surrounding land and block the entry to the land in the middle. This would ultimately force people to give in, said Sanjay Baul of Bairagitol village whose 30 bighas of family land were "forcefully acquired" by Benazir in 2018-2019.

"Two locals left for India with their families after selling their land to Benazir," said Biplob Baul. One of them is Pranshanta Baul, 40, who left the country along with his wife

and four children about a year ago. "I was compelled to sell my 51 decimals of agricultural land at Tk 2

Biplob Baul

resort Rahman, assistant Mahfuzur

Taimur Islam, officer-in-charge at a

bringing such allegations now.

Victims said they never had the heart to seek legal redress against Benazir.

obliged. "I was tasked with planting some

respond to the text messages.