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ROOPPUR POWER PLANT Govt eyes quick completion

Project gets highest allocation in revised budget; MRT, Matarbari also on priority list

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant has seen the highest allocation for a single project in the revised Annual Development Plan as the interim government wants to make it operational as quickly as possible.

The government approved the Tk 2,16,000 crore revised ADP for FY25 last week, downsized by Tk 49,000 crore from the original one.

The Rooppur power station and related projects have been allocated Tk 11,899 crore, including Tk 9,454 crore for the power plant alone. The allocation for these projects was Tk 10,502 crore in the original ADP.

The total cost of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant project is Tk 1,14,225 crore, with the majority financed by Russia. Around Tk 75,000 crore was spent from the total cost as of June last year.

Five other projects related to the electricity line, high frequency telecommunications system, and water supply for the power plant received a combined allocation of Tk 2,424 crore in the revised ADP, up from the original allocation of Tk 2,226 crore.

The total cost of the five projects is Tk 17,471 crore, of which Tk 6,792 crore was spent as of June last year.

REVISED FUND ALLOCATION FOR MAJOR PROJECTS

Project	Total cost (Tk in crore)	Spending till June 24 (Tk in crore)	Allocation in FY25 (Tk in crore)
Rooppur Power Plant	1,14,225	74,991	9,454
5 Rooppur related projects	17,471	6,792	2,445
3 MRT lines	1,28,687	30,719	4,552
4 Jica-funded projects in Matarbari	1,05,455	45,601	12,189
3 China-funded major projects	52,387	24,677	8,288

These include a Tk 10,981 crore power evacuation line funded under an Indian line of credit (LoC). As of June 2024, about Tk 5,242 crore was spent from the total cost. In the revised ADP, the project received Tk 648 crore against the original Tk 838 crore.

A joint India-Bangladesh review on Wednesday and Thursday found the implementation of the projects under the Indian lines of credit to be slow. However, the Rooppur power evacuation line project has seen fast implementation.

According to the original project proposal, unit-1 of the power plant was supposed to go into operation in December 2022, unit-2 in October 2023 and the entire project was scheduled for completion by December 31, 2025.

The construction of unit-1 formally started in November 2017 and unit-2 in July 2018.

However, implementation has been delayed due to several reasons and now the government is expecting to complete it by December 2027.

Project officials said they were planning to start the test run of the 1,200MW unit-1 by this year and go for commercial production in the first half of next year.

Russia's state corporation for nuclear energy Rosatom is implementing the Rooppur project.

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8-year-old struggles for life after 'rape'

STAR REPORT

An eight-year-old girl has been struggling for her life at a hospital in the capital since she was allegedly raped on Wednesday night in Magura.

The child was placed on life support last night, family members said.

She was brought to the facility in an unconscious state and her condition had not improved since.

The 3rd grader was visiting her elder sister's house in Magura town as her school was closed for Ramadan.

Her mother said that someone found her child alone at her sister's house and raped her.

Police detained the child's brother-in-law and his father, but have not said whether they would be charged with rape.

On Thursday morning, after her sister's mother-in-law took the child to a hospital, the neighbours informed her parents who live in an upazila of the district.

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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The picture of violence against women is grim

Data show nearly 12,000 women and girls faced violence in last 5yrs, over 6,000 raped

NILIMA JAHAN

While International Women's Day is a global celebration of women's rights, equality, and empowerment, the statistics from Bangladesh on violence against women paint a troubling and stark reality.

In the past five years from 2020-2024, at least 11,758 women and girls in Bangladesh have fallen victim to torture and violence, with 6,305 of them being raped, according to data from the Human Rights Support Society (HRSS).

What's even more alarming is that 3,471 of these rape victims were under the age of 18, making up over 55 percent of the total cases.

Additionally, 1,089 women and girls were gang-raped, and 207 were murdered following sexual assault, including 118 children.

Moreover, at least 50 victims took their own lives due to the trauma they endured.

Violence against women goes beyond rape.

In the last five years, a total of 2,624 women and girls have suffered sexual harassment.

At least 355 faced physical abuse for dowry in this period. Of them, 26 committed suicide, according to HRSS.

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Fight to increase women's political participation

SHAVEENA ANAM

International Women's Day has its roots in political struggles for gender equality, yet its original essence has been diluted over time.

Women's political participation is a fundamental requirement for democracy, justice and effective governance. Studies conducted by the UN have consistently shown that when women hold leadership positions, societies benefit, particularly in areas of health, education and social welfare.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Yet Bangladesh experiences a stark contradiction.

Since 1991, Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia have alternated in holding the highest office, but their leadership did not translate into meaningful structural change.

Critical sectors like health and education remain severely underfunded, while entrenched patriarchy and tokenism continue to marginalise women in politics.

Thanks to the July uprising, Bangladesh now has an opportunity to reshape this narrative. Can the country leverage its evolving political landscape to ensure greater female participation in governance?

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NCP ready for polls anytime

Nahid says, but first wants July charter, progress in uprising killing trials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Citizen Party is practically ready for elections at any time, its Convener Nahid Islam said yesterday.

He, however, added that his party wants the "July Charter" in effect and visible progress towards justice for the July killings before the national election.

"We said we wanted to see a constituent assembly election in addition to the national parliament election. However, the election is not our only demand at this moment... We also want to see a visible trial process. We want the July Charter, which was supposed to be signed by all [parties], to be implemented before the election," Nahid told a press briefing.

The briefing was held at Banglamotor following the first general meeting of the NCP.

Nahid said the implementation of the July Charter will allow the general public to see which political parties are in favour of or against reforming the state.

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Amligola is known for bangles, finely crafted by artisans at small factories in the Old Dhaka neighbourhood. Although business remains dull most of the time, the workers are currently busy ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr shopping season. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Star INTERVIEW

Ensuring data interoperability a top priority

Says Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, Yunus's special assistant for ICT, posts and telecom

MAHMUDUL HASAN

Ensuring interoperability of data across all ministries will be a top priority for the government to deliver seamless public services, said Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, the newly appointed special assistant to chief adviser with executive authority over the ministry of posts, telecommunications and ICT.

"I have met the chief adviser and there is a clear directive from him to establish interoperability among ministries to streamline service delivery -- achieving data interoperability is my foremost responsibility," he told The Daily Star on Wednesday.

To achieve this, he plans to engage with all ministries to explore digital transformation strategies and implement interoperability for more efficient services.

"I have worked with Muhammad Yunus for a few days now and found that his ideas are focused on simplifying systems to improve public services. I initially started

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